



**A Pilot Survey of
Community Development Workers in Ireland:
evaluation of methodological framework and findings**

A report commissioned by Combat Poverty Agency

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Foreword

The Combat Poverty Agency is the state advisory agency developing and promoting evidence-based proposals and measures to combat poverty in Ireland. It was established under the Combat Poverty Agency Act 1986 and operates under the auspices of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The Combat Poverty Agency has a specified role in relation to community development (Section 4.2c and 4.2d) which it promotes as a means of tackling poverty.

Community development is about people working collectively to tackle poverty and for inclusion and equality. In Ireland, community development features in a range of national policy commitments and programmes. The recent decade has seen much research produced on various aspects of community development work that have contributed significantly to our knowledge of community development in Ireland¹. More recently an all-island consortium has developed occupational standards for quality community work.

Community development workers, both paid and unpaid, are key in supporting communities to tackle poverty and to create change. At present there is no nationally available data on community development workers in Ireland such as: their numbers, profile, employment context, work settings and responsibilities, experience, education and training, and organisational management and development.

In the context of adding to knowledge about community development, Combat Poverty initiated a pilot survey of community development workers. The pilot survey was intended to inform on the feasibility of undertaking a national survey of community development workers. This report, by Julius Komolafe, presents the pilot study findings, with specific consideration of the design of an appropriate methodology and framework for a national survey of community workers.

¹ Powell, Fred and Martin Geoghegan. *The Politics of Community Development: Reclaiming Civil Society or Reinventing Governance*. Dublin: A&A Farmar
Donoghue et al. 1999. *Uncovering the Non-profit Sector in Ireland: Its Economic Value and Significance*, Dublin: National College of Ireland

Executive Summary

The purpose of the pilot survey was to explore methodological issues so as to help design a methodology and framework for a national survey that would provide baseline data on community development workers and organizations in Ireland.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1. A detailed literature review was carried out of research studies into community development thinking and practice in Ireland from the 1960s onwards. Certain community development programmes have directly influenced research into community development in Ireland. A number of studies at different periods were examined to explore the historical and philosophical foundations for research into community development in Ireland. The review also highlighted where and what gaps existed in the research, in particular the lack of national baseline data on community development workers in Ireland and on their numbers; profile; employment context; work settings and responsibilities; education and training; and their experience.

1.2. Studies into community development in Ireland since the 1920s were primarily social surveys within which community development work was a unifying concept. The growth of community development work in Ireland since the 1920s was linked to wider political and economic structures and values, for example, the weight given to family, community and community organizations, and the studies reflected this. Hence, studies should be viewed in the context of the political, social and economic structures of their day. In the 1980s, research theory and practice was greatly influenced by UK literature on community work. The urgent need for economic growth was an important factor also in community work and attendant studies.

1.2.1. Community development in the period 1930s to 1950s emphasised charity and participation. It was followed in the 1960s by self-help initiatives, including co-operatives and the emergence of Gluaiseacht Chearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta (the Gaeltacht Civil Rights Movement). This reflected the growth of models that addressed unemployment, self-help and direct action. The Muintir na Tire model encouraged local enterprise and community identity. The 1960s research focused on community-

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based social services oriented towards direct action with an agenda of structural or social change. Although focused on community, it did not recognize the need for policy solutions or for improving personal capacity to undertake new community development roles.

1.2.2. Overall, 1970s studies and projects emphasized a 'community development approach' and action research, and they helped initiate a movement for structural change.

Two trends emerged in community development in the 1970s: A critical evaluation of the involvement of the State in the politics of community development, and an emphasis on poverty. Community organizations such as the women's movement and the trade union movement facilitated the development of citizen involvement and community activism. The right to consultation and direct participation by communities became important principles in research. One strand of research addressed the potential of community development and community action in addressing poverty and its causes. Another body of research examined community work practice.

In 1973, the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty (NCPSCP) funded many urban and rural projects for excluded groups. Community development studies examined structural factors and sought the establishment of community groups to tackle poverty.

1.2.3. The 1980s saw recession, emigration and service cutbacks but also the growth of partnership processes. Conditions stimulated interest in the State's role in supporting inclusion. In 1986, the Combat Poverty Agency was established. The dominant theme of 1980s research was the significance of community development and direct action. Another theme was the increasingly hostile relationship between communities and the State. At the same time, the State looked more to communities to respond to difficult social issues like unemployment, and communities initiated projects to tackle their disadvantaged position. Between 1985 and 1989, supported by the EU Poverty II programme, studies addressed the State's re-organization of community development practices.

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This led to 1990s research into the mainstreaming of local organizations and structures, management of voluntary community bodies and the adoption of community development principles by the State's Community Development Programme. Another theme of 1990s research was the participation of excluded people and groups in addressing the causes and effects of their exclusion and poverty.

1.2.4. The 1990s saw the emergence of a culture of cutbacks but research continued to study the building of community capacity and processes for a more equal society. In the 1990s, government, community bodies and the private sector began to co-operate on community projects and area-based partnership structures developed. A series of publications by the Community Workers Co-operative critiqued partnership processes and their relationship with community development approaches. Other studies also examined practices and relationships within the partnership model.

In the 1990s, EU-supported peace-building prompted a lot of cross-border initiatives and related research projects. Community politics, youth activism and support for marginalised urban and rural communities also came to the fore in research studies. Also during the 1990s, evaluation studies on community projects supported reflection and forward planning on such projects.

1.2.5. The capability of the 1990s partnership model to deliver change from a community perspective was frequently critiqued in studies of the 2000s. In 2000, the Government White Paper on the Voluntary Sector acknowledged the importance of the voluntary sector. This was followed in 2006 by the Taskforce on Active Citizenship, which was reinforced by a study on all-island occupational standards on community development work. Another important report was the evaluation of the Community Development Consultancy Course (CDCC), which facilitated analysis of community-based education.

Economic development, immigration and population growth gave rise to community initiatives on social exclusion and the rights of asylum-seekers and other ethnic minorities. This became a new theme for social research studies as did professionalization in community development work.

Other contemporary studies analysed community development groups; the impact of the border; community development projects and family resource centres in the south and mid-west; volunteer-based organizations; and community development in cross-border regions. Recent studies have examined crime and possible links with disadvantage, and issues of Travellers. This shows that now, as in the 1950s, social studies are linked to the wider political, economic and social conditions of Ireland.

1.3. Although there are national policy commitments to using community development as a means of addressing poverty and social exclusion, basic data on community development workers are still lacking. This limits our understanding of how community development is used to tackle poverty and our knowledge of the community development population. Such understanding might help strengthen skills and capacities within community development and the formulation of community development policy.

1.4. Gaps in the research knowledge on community development have been identified in the literature review, leading to the conclusion that baseline data, secured by means of a national survey, is needed on community development workers in Ireland to help assess the impact of community development on poverty.

Chapter 2: Purpose of the pilot survey

2.1. The purpose of the pilot survey was to examine methodology and assess its suitability for use in a national survey. The initial objectives of a national survey would be to:

- Strengthen the information base about the nature and extent of community development approaches to tackling poverty and social exclusion;
- Increase information for assessing the impact of community development as an anti-poverty strategy;
- Provide information to help strengthen the skills and technical knowledge of community development workers.

2.2. The pilot research asked the following questions:

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- Who are community development workers? What is their age profile and how many are there? What types of community development organizations employ community development workers?
- What experience and knowledge do community development workers bring to community development work?
- Is there a link between educational qualification in community development work and the different experiences of community development workers?
- What are the most challenging obstacles to career progression for community development workers?
- What can be learned from this that might secure a stable and secure work environment for community development workers?
- Role and work setting: What do community development workers actually do? Where do they work and who do they work with?
- Working strategy: How do community groups plan their work? How do they reflect on their work practice? How do they manage their work performance? How do community groups and organizations recruit, support and supervise their staff?
- What are the essential characteristics of community development practice? What key issues do community development workers need to address? What types of support are most helpful for community development workers?

2.3. Donegal was chosen as the pilot study site because of its mix of urban and rural settings and the scale of activity in these settings and in cross-border work.

Chapter 3: Evaluation and methodological framework

3.1. A survey-based method was used to gather data and probe methodological issues. There were two elements to the pilot:

- Construction of an advisory group network comprising two strands, a research advisory group and a local advisory group:
- Construction of a survey, which consisted of postal and web questionnaires.

These were issued to:

- Paid community development workers

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- Unpaid community development workers
- Community development organizations.

The survey was carried out by a project researcher with support from the advisory groups and from Combat Poverty Agency.

3.1.1. To select the pilot research advisory group, a national list of community development workers was compiled and 14 people were selected based on their degree of involvement in community development issues. The group evaluated and helped refine the draft questionnaires, advised on the overall project approach and on the definition of community development workers.

The Local Steering Group (LSG) included stakeholders from the community and voluntary and the statutory sectors in Donegal. It provided local knowledge; helped to identify community development workers and organizations; advised on the project approach; and supported the administration of questionnaires. Members were selected in the same way as the research advisory group.

Using 'snowballing' and 'cascading' techniques, the local advisory group was used to make contact with community development workers and help build a database of such workers for the survey.

3.1.2. The pilot survey defined community development as an occupation, both paid and unpaid, that aimed to build active and influential communities based on specific values of participation, empowerment, collective action, justice, equality and mutual respect, and which was committed to challenge oppression and tackle poverty and inequality.

A community development organization was defined as one that had a primary community development responsibility or a community development work remit.

Community development work was defined as an activity that involved paid and unpaid work with communities with the aim of building active and influential area and interest-based communities.

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The pilot study sought to identify all the community development workers in the pilot area who fitted these definitions.

Community development workers were defined as paid and unpaid workers who had a remit of a specific location or social issue involving a wide range of roles and tasks.

3.1.3. The questions for the postal and web form surveys were developed after examining previous relevant studies and with input from both advisory groups.

The pilot study used quantitative data collection methods so as to provide reliable empirical data.

The questionnaires used a coded questions survey tailored separately to community organizations, to paid community development workers and to unpaid community development workers or community activists.

The questionnaires consisted of six sections:

- 1 Personal/organizational characteristics
- 2 Employment context
- 3 Education and training
- 4 Experience
- 5 Work settings and responsibilities
- 6 Organizational management and development.

Questions offered a variety of response options from rate scales to yes/no choices, multiple choice and 'other answer'.

3.1.4. The target population for the pilot survey was defined as 'community development workers', including those working in a paid and unpaid capacity, in community development organizations in Donegal.

Certain difficulties arose because of the following:

- The survey was done in summer time

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- The variety of policy contexts in which community development work is carried out in Donegal
- Community development workers or organizations may not have that term in their title
- Those that do use that title may not be involved in community development work.

3.1.5. Questionnaire respondents were asked to self-identify as community development workers by stating their community development work or title. This had implications for pilot data but also allowed community development tasks or roles to be identified. Self-identification raises ethical and methodological issues for a national survey but it did provide interesting data.

3.1.6. To estimate the total potential sample and to build the list of those to be sampled, 'snowballing' and 'cascading' networking techniques were used. A statistical method was used to estimate the total potential sample. In addition, published and internet data sources were consulted in the sample building process. This variety of techniques enabled researchers to compare and verify methods and strengthened the validity of the process.

The snowball process involved compiling, through the LSG, lists of community development organizations or workers. Questionnaires were issued to community development organizations, which were asked, in turn, to pass them on to other organizations, for distribution to their paid and unpaid community workers.

A contacts list was also built through 'cascade networking'. Three of the 13 members of the LSG working in the statutory sector were asked to provide contact email addresses of community development workers. A new contact could be 'cascaded' from an original contact. Questionnaires were sent to those on the contact lists. Published and internet data sources were also used.

The use of both methods ensured representativeness and the participation of community development workers and organizations in the survey. They had drawbacks also. If these techniques were to be used again, the following precaution

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should be taken – a reliable indicator should be created of who to survey (in terms of their population, opinions and changes over time) in order to assess the reliability of the survey before snowball or cascade networking techniques are used.

The data collected through the different techniques identified a total of 40 paid community development workers, 35 unpaid community development workers and 40 community development organizations in Donegal. Of these, 35 paid community development workers, 20 unpaid community development workers and 20 community development organizations were contacted by electronic and postal mail and given the questionnaires.

The sample was representative of all community development workers in the survey area. In order to determine the total number of community development workers in Donegal, we had to estimate the total potential sample of community development workers. We used the mean sample size method to estimate the proportion of community development workers in Donegal.

3.1.7. Feedback from respondents indicated that most found the questionnaire easy to complete.

Some respondents found some of the questions unclear, vague or too advanced for a person with low levels of literacy or education. This might be avoided in a national survey if some research topics were removed from the questionnaire and replaced by another data collection method, such as verification workshops.

A small number of respondents suggested the questionnaire should include some other issues and questions. Certain difficulties were also identified in relation to specific questions, such as sensitivity of information requested. Some questions might also need to be re-worded.

Two sources of significant frustration in the design of the questionnaire were:

- 15 per cent of all respondents said the questionnaire was too long
- the technicality of filling in the questionnaire.

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The median time taken to completely fill in the questionnaire in both the paper and web-based samples was 45 minutes.

The timing of a national survey would be important, because of difficulties posed by the pilot being done in summer time.

A major problem was the absence of a connection between the questionnaire survey and other means of collecting data such as verification workshops or interviews.

In future studies snowball and cascade techniques should be combined with other methods that might serve to determine who the survey sample should be from the outset, thus maximising the total number of community development workers that respond. It may be appropriate to use a range of research methods for identifying, collecting, organizing and analysing a future study.

Chapter 4: Findings

Based on the survey findings about community development, a profile can be drawn of community development workers and organizations in Donegal.

- Community development workers (paid and unpaid) were typically female, and had a high proportion of white, settled Irish population;
- A majority chose a career in community development work from the late 1990s;
- Most had a long track record of voluntary and community development work before their current post;
- A majority of paid workers were employed within a local action or issue-based organization;
- Many paid and unpaid workers were engaged in cross-community projects and border partnerships;
- The majority of paid workers took up a wide range of personal roles in tackling local community development actions and specific community development issues;
- Most paid workers worked on a full-time basis with a significant proportion on renewable contracts;

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- A majority of paid workers who earned more than the median salary for government and non-profit organizations in Donegal worked in the statutory sector;
- Involvement levels of paid workers varied from 31 to 40 hours per week. While this is quite low, it might suggest that we need to include in the paid worker questionnaire questions about night work and weekend work;
- The average hours worked by the unpaid worker was three and a half hours per week;
- Most paid and unpaid community workers held a primary degree or higher qualification and a significant proportion of them held their qualification within a community development discipline;
- Accredited qualifications in community development tended not to be seen as a requirement for recruiting paid workers for community development posts;
- Considerable time was spent by paid workers in Donegal on one-to-one work to support and encourage community members' involvement;
- Unpaid workers valued the importance of self-help training but most indicated that self-help training was not completely valued by their organizations;
- The majority of community development workers indicated a wide range of barriers to training;
- Most workers identified a wide range of issues in their current roles that undermined their role as community development worker. Issues included:
 - concerns about administration and funding of projects,
 - conflict between management,
 - lack of enough paid staff,
 - control of community organization by the State through funding,
 - insecurity in careers,
 - lack of clarity about terms and conditions of employment,
- A majority of workers indicated that they acted as a link with the community working in their neighbourhood;
- Usually there was a mix of working methods, which included the four main methods described below:
 - empowering and supporting individuals' involvement,
 - enabling the development of new and existing groups,

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- identifying assets and capacities that are latent within communities,
- building capacity that allows the community to share knowledge and resources effectively;
- Most workers worked as part of a community work team;
- Exchange of information was perceived as a problem. It was hindered by secretiveness about the community organization's plans, lack of resources to share information, and reluctance on the part of some community organizations.

Chapter 5: Organization structure

A profile of community development organizations can be drawn as follows:

- A majority of organizations surveyed were formed between 1991 and 2005;
- A high proportion of community organizations are made up of the following types
 - formal (86 per cent),
 - statutory (29 per cent),
 - integrated development company (29 per cent);
- Community development organizations in Donegal are established mainly to take up issues-based support work affecting a number of groups;
- Organizations primarily target marginalized people and largely work in peace-building, to provide general services to the community and to accomplish social change;
- The majority of community development organizations are registered with the county development board;
- Organizations form strong relationships with state and development agencies. They network and form partnerships with other community organizations at levels ranging from county to transnational in order to source funding;
- They engage in a wide range of policy issues;
- A high level of stakeholders are involved in drawing up organizations' work and strategic plans;
- All organizations surveyed are committed to providing staff support in one way or another.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Although the study aimed to be comprehensive, it was too small to establish accurately the profile of community development workers and the nature and content of community development work in Ireland overall.

However, the data that it provided helped address the research questions and the initial objective of a national survey, which would be to strengthen the information base available on the nature and content of community development work, so that the impact of community development as an anti-poverty strategy could be assessed. The pilot data also supported another objective of greater information, which would be to use it to develop strategies to strengthen the skills and technical knowledge of community development workers.

The reliance on questionnaires to source data has provided an information base about the numbers, profile, experience, and work remit of the community development population in Donegal.

If these findings were to be verified in a national study:

- Key points that describe the 'occupation' of community development workers in Ireland could be drawn;
- Recommendations about the key issues that may need to be addressed by community development workers, employers, professional organizations and policy-makers could be made.

However, additional methods would be needed to connect the questionnaire survey with other sources of information and verification.

Recommendations

It is suggested that in a national survey:

- Questionnaires be combined with one or more qualitative methods, e.g. interviews, which could supplement the questionnaire responses;
- Include in the survey planning a provision to run meetings (called verification workshops) for networks of community development workers. This could help reduce the length of questionnaires;

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- Consider a 'count survey' of community development organizations. There are potential sources of additional information, notably the registration of community development organizations with their regional county development board. This could help to map the community development organizations in Ireland;
- The decision on who should be included in a national sample should be based on a core definition of community development workers and community development organizations and combined with scrutiny as to whether workers or organizations actually were doing community development work. The established findings from this survey might be usable as a check to see that organizations or workers considered for inclusion in a national survey fitted the remit and definitions.

There are three recommendations for further study:

- The application of the model in Figure 1

The pilot study showed that the community development model in Figure 1 is much more a target model, illustrating who *should* be in the sample. It does not fit into the framework of who *is* to be included in the survey. For the present model to do this, it should be integrated with the pilot study definition of a community development worker and community development organization and used as a tool to analyse and determine those to be included in the sample.

- Data collection

The use of self-identification presents problems for a national survey due to its size and scope and the objective of generating national data. Survey data should be developed and identified through regional focus groups of community development workers across the country, using the expertise of the research advisory groups. From this, the lists of community development workers could be built using list-building systems.

- Analysis of the survey

It is important to have a separate section in any further study, which might bring out explicitly the contribution each category of worker makes to community development work and which might enable some exploration of views about the relationship between paid and unpaid workers.

Chapter 1 Literature Review

1. Introduction

Understanding of the nature and extent of community development and community development work in Ireland has been informed by a range of research. While this paper does not evaluate the different concepts and approaches used in previous research or the impact of community development (see Motherway, 2006) it does provide a short literature review on community development work, drawing on various empirical studies to explore the nature of research into community development in Ireland since the 1960s. Through this review, we can identify more clearly the nature and extent of research gaps and in particular the lack of national baseline data on community development workers in Ireland and on their numbers, profile, employment context, work settings and responsibilities, experience, and their education and training. In order to show this gap in existing studies, this review explores the historical and philosophical underpinnings of community development research in Ireland.

1.2. Identifying the field of research in community development in Ireland

The growth of community work and community development in Ireland over the years has prompted academics and community organizations in various sectors to undertake a number of social surveys or ethnographic studies in community development. On examination, such studies are seen to have operated within a certain set of principles using community development work as an integrating concept. However, although a number of distinct studies in community development over the last five decades operated within such common principles, they also displayed links to wider Irish political economy structures and values and to community development programmes. In other words, Irish research on community development can be said to be situated within the social, economic and cultural history of the State.

This arises from a number of factors such as: the focus given to analysis and policy of family and community and also the effectiveness of community work and community organizations. Theoretically, many studies focused directly on community initiatives or programmes. Others addressed the issue of poverty and the State's role in shaping the nature of community development.

It is also worth mentioning that research practice and theory has been highly influenced (especially since the 1980s) by UK literature on community work, adapted to the particular social and political context of the Republic of Ireland. However, community development research in Ireland has reflected also the major social and economic changes that have occurred in Irish society.

1.2.1 The nature of community development research in the 1960s

The growth of *Muintir na Tíre* from the 1930s to the 1950s and the emergence of Gluaiseacht Chearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta (the Gaeltacht Civil Rights Movements) in the late 1960s not only influenced the development of community development action and structures, including co-operatives, but also provided a springboard for community development research. Seeking a way to move beyond the perceived failure of traditional community approaches to tackling poverty in the period from the 1930s to the 1950s,² the 1960s research focused on initiatives by community associations rather than interpersonal approaches. These insisted on transformative social change and reflected a growth in community development projects focused on unemployment; on self-help and on direct action groups. It also responded to a renewed interest in the structural dimensions of poverty at national and EU-programme level. Most important, 1960s community development research emphasised community-based social services, oriented towards direct action, where local activism had an agenda of structural change (Ó Cinnéide and Walsh, 1992: 329).

Community development researchers in the 1960s described a period of significant growth in the community development movement, with the expansion of community development co-operatives distinct from the state sector (Lee,

² In the period 1930—1950, although traditional community approaches emphasised participation, charity was a guiding principle and one from which self help thinking was to spring.

2003). Conceptually, such researchers set out a sustained critical analysis aimed at developing understanding of the style and leadership of organised local communities. The account of McNabb's survey of community social structures (McNabb, 1964) suggests that many of the 1960s studies were leadership led rather than participative. Many studies sought to chart the trends in community development as a way of capturing the complex reality of community development work and practice in Ireland. Thus, 1960s community development research was predominantly historical or qualitative in approach.

Two characteristics of this strand of Irish community development research were the understanding of different strategies in community development practice and the intertwining of a community development approach with community-based social services strategies. The heart of this research is considered to be the description of transformation of a variety of community development initiatives.

Thomasson (1962) reminds us of another type of research undertaken in 1960s Ireland. In his study he explored a wide range of community initiatives offered by *Muintir na Tíre* for advancing community development.³ This form of practice encouraged local enterprise and the development of community identity but there was a gap between understanding how local communities organized and recognising the need for growth within individuals who worked to tackle these issues. Most community development research in the 1960s did not recognize the need for policy solutions.

1.2.2 The nature of community development research in the 1970s

A period emerged in the 1970s when there was critical evaluation of state involvement in community development. A specific association with poverty began to emerge as a strong theme in Irish community development during this period. Cullen places the origins of this association in the Poverty 1 programme of the 1970s. It was, Cullen said, 'the first attempt by statutory authorities to

³ In Thomasson's work, *Muintir na Tíre* became the voice of the communities of Ireland, providing them with a power base and the means of obtaining essential infrastructural facilities, leading to an improved quality of life for all.

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promote, resource and support the development of community organizations to tackle poverty' (Cullen, 1994, 100).

This pulled 1970s community development research strongly towards community action.

Community organizations played a significant part in the development of citizen involvement and community activism in Ireland. For instance, the right to community consultation and to direct democratic participation by communities became important guiding principles in community development research in the 1970s. This type of 1970s research took place within the contexts of secular research, public research, state-related research and EU-funded research but with different research goals. One type of 1970s community development research addressed the undeveloped nature of community development in addressing poverty (Ó Cinnéide, 1972). Another aspect of research related to community action programmes that addressed the causes of poverty.

By the late 1970s there were different sponsored social survey projects around the country managed by different community associations. Over time, many community associations, groups and organizations started to command the attention and respect of government. The women's movement and the trade union movement in the 1970s, for example, played significant parts in the development of citizen involvement and community activism, and were influential.

In this period a discrete body of community development projects and research addressed the objectives of community work practice rather than community social need. These types of study featured prominently within the secular and statutory sectors. Other 1970s studies had a participative focus. The Catholic Church and the Labour Party, for instance, encouraged the Government to appoint the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty (NCPSCP) in 1973. As a result, the NCPSCP funded over 20 projects in rural and urban areas that worked with specific groups who were deemed to be excluded from power. A distinctive feature of this period was community development studies that examined the question of structural factors and sought to influence the

establishment of community development groups to tackle poverty and improve people's quality of life. In Waterford City, for instance, the Waterford Area Resource Project commissioned an economic study of the area's potential. The project report was used to help establish the Waterford People's Forum. This brought together trade unionists, community workers, tenants, local public sector employees and others to form a co-operative to improve cultural and social life in the town. According to Ó Cinnéide and Walsh (1990, 329) the studies and projects undertaken in the 1970s used a 'community development approach, with the principal method of work being action research'. These studies can be seen to have initiated a movement for structural change in Ireland.

1.2.3 The nature of community development research in the 1980s

The recession of the 1980s, which saw escalating unemployment, a drop in spending on public services and a major emigration problem in particular among young people, narrowed the scope of state intervention in working class, local communities (Collins, 2002). As such there was stronger interest in the State's approach to providing new supports and promoting inclusion, including the establishment of formal partnership structures and processes. Taking the lead from the EU Poverty Programmes, in 1986 the Government, during the life of EU Poverty II, established the Combat Poverty Agency. Amongst its statutory responsibilities was the promotion and support of community development as an anti-poverty strategy.

Numerous social surveys and ethnographic studies of communities in the 1980s drew attention to tensions between communities and the State and state bodies. Core research in this period focused on the broad significance of community development in the direct action sector with a specific focus on the description of local activism in community work (Motherway 2006). This was the dominant research theme in the 1980s. A large body of literature in the 1980s explored local community needs, driven by the desire to address issues of poverty, unemployment and disadvantage (Cullen, 1994). This gave 1980s research a strong micro focus.⁴ One such study was that carried out by O Cearbhaill and Ó

⁴ A micro focus research framework is designed to address local issues.

Cinnéide in 1986 – a detailed case study of the rural community in Killala, Co Mayo – which provided an extensive overview of a locally based development initiative in the west of Ireland and how it connected individual local groups and united them in pursuing the interests and needs of the wider community.

In a similar way, during this period many local groups initiated projects and studies as a means of tackling a wider pattern of community disadvantage (Ó Cinnéide, 1985). The State also looked to communities to respond to complex, intractable social problems, especially unemployment. Hence, initiatives such as job creation, community employment training and community morale were prominent in the 1980s.

Many studies in the period 1985—1989 (carried out through the EU Poverty II programme) acknowledged and addressed the reform or reorganization of community development practices by the State⁵ (Ó Cinnéide, 1987). This had significant implications for community development research in the 1990s, which examined issues such as the mainstreaming of local organizational structures, the viability of local voluntary management committees and the application of some of the key principles of community development to the work of the Community Development Programme (CDP).⁶ This is reflected particularly in the amount of studies that supported excluded groups and individuals to become actively involved in addressing both the causes and consequences of their marginalization, exclusion and poverty.⁷ The understanding of these issues that was derived through studies in the 1980s helped bridge the research gap on improving service delivery through participation and through better access to services and decision making. These three aspects of the studies gap had particular relevance to community development work and research in the 1990s.

⁵ This re-organization of community development practices promoted the establishment of the community development fund in 1990 and the setting up of the Community Development Programme (CDP).

⁶ To a large degree the thinking behind the establishment of different community development programmes was to address the importance of community empowerment, participation and inclusion. This programmes supported excluded groups and individuals to become actively involved in addressing both the causes and the consequences of their marginalization, exclusion and poverty.

⁷ See *Evaluation of the Community Development Programme, Nexus Research 2002*

1.2.4 The nature of community development research in the 1990s

The 1980s ended in a period where the agenda of social reform gave way to the politics of public expenditure cuts and the strengthening of an enterprise culture (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). Community development research in the 1990s continued to focus on building community capacity and collective processes for a more equal society. The dominant theme of research studies in the 1990s, according to Collins (1991, 37), was the link ‘between deprivation and alienation’.

The use of community work studies undertaken in the 1980s as an accompaniment to broader integrated local development strategies for tackling social inclusion in the 1990s brought significant gains. For instance, the establishment of the social partnership model of the 1990s saw community and voluntary organizations working with government and private stakeholders in pursuit of cohesive community projects.⁸ The key contribution of the Government in the 1990s was the development of the area-based partnerships, which were set up under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) in 1991. The aim was to co-ordinate statutory and voluntary sectors and the other social partners in an effort to combat social and economic exclusion and to create enterprise and employment. The PESP was an example of the recognition of community endeavour at political and policy-making level.

The partnership approach, involving ‘community interests, state development agency executives, health board and local authority officials and social partner representatives’ (PESP, 1991, 77) had been heralded by the Poverty III programme (1990—1994), which took the view that poverty was multi-dimensional. The social partnership model (Frazer, 1996) helped secure recognition for three separate insights. These were, the contribution of volunteers and community activists; the highly-skilled nature of professional staff and the way in which their combination of practical skills, knowledge and experience influenced community work (Crickley, 1996); and the sophisticated

⁸ Government Publication (1997). *Partnership 2000, Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness*, Stationery Office: Dublin.

relationships that existed among the State, its agencies, the community and other partners.⁹

The Community Workers' Co-operative (CWC) articulated this relationship in a series of publications. The 1992 publication, *Consensus or Censorship: Community work in partnership with the State*, for instance, examined some of the key questions relating to the trend towards the development of partnership models and their relationship to community work. The publication analysed contemporary experience of such models and it generated some debate on future strategies. CWC's 1996 publication, *Partnership in Action*, examined the role of community development and partnership in Ireland. This series of articles drew on a range of experiences and perspectives from among the community sector itself, from those directly involved in running and managing partnerships, government departments, statutory bodies, academics and independent researchers.

The pattern of relationships within the partnership model provided the context for further studies¹⁰. To date such research has been broad in its remit, extending from the traditional functional research areas of explaining trends in Irish community development to community development work methods, activities and even community development programme issues.

In addition, economic expansion and peace on the island of Ireland made possible during the 1990s a new array of citizen-based peace building activities and cross-border contacts, and related research projects. This had exciting implications for research into community development and community work. It increased the significance of community politics in the Republic of Ireland, notably powered by youth activism work (Geoghegan, 1998) and by public initiatives and private efforts based in communities of the urban working class and the marginalized rural poor (Curtin and Varley, 1995). These studies used

⁹ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (1997). *Supporting Voluntary Activity: A Green Paper on the Community and Voluntary Sector and its Relationship with the State*. Government Publications: Dublin.

¹⁰ These often reflected an interest among academics, government agencies and in particular community organizations with a community development remit in understanding the nature of the relationship.

participatory learning methods, involving micro-level interaction with local communities, to articulate local community politics.

1.2.5 The nature of community development research in the 2000s

In the 2000s the capacity of the 1990s partnership model to 'deliver the goods' and secure continued influence was questioned by researchers. For instance, the Community Workers Co-operative publication *Partnership, Participation and Power* (CWC, 2001) looked at the contribution of the Integrated Local Development Programme to the development of structures for participation. The research was based on a number of case studies and survey material.

This question was the dominant theme of 2000s studies in community development in Ireland. This theme is clear in the publication of the White Paper, *Supporting Voluntary Activity*, in September 2000, which marked a stated change in government attitudes to the support of community and voluntary groups. The White Paper acknowledged the importance of the voluntary sector and the relatively weak nature of voluntary sector infrastructure¹¹.

Another related report was the evaluation of the Community Development Consultancy Course (CDCC) provided by a partnership consisting of AONTAS, Meitheal and Community Action Network (CAN) in 2004 (Tierney, 2004). The evaluation process provided a useful opportunity to engage stakeholders in a reflective, analytic process to capture and interpret key developments in community-based education (Tierney, 2004).

Ireland's experience of population growth in the 2000s, when immigration overtook emigration, gave rise to another aspect of community development and another area of community development study. A number of voluntary organizations now deal with a wide range of issues related to social exclusion

¹¹ Government of Ireland. 2000 *Supporting Voluntary Activity: A White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector*. Government Stationery Office: Dublin.

and the rights of excluded groups, including ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum-seekers. This type of research study represents a fast-growing area within community work issues and ideas. Thus, modernisation and population growth are bringing changes in the nature of research and projects in community development community work. Many studies address a wide range of groups, organizations and interests in creating a vision of social change.

More recently, an all island consortium of community development groups, education providers and statutory bodies has initiated work on the development of all-island occupational standards on community development work. This expresses the qualities and skills of community work through a series of statements on work standards, values and principles.¹² Other research explores working conditions in the community and voluntary sector, for example, .The Wheel's survey of salaries among the community, voluntary and charity sector, published in July 2008, revealed a growing third sector with a high demand for professional skills.¹³

A number of other studies have dealt with the following themes:

- A profile of community development groups (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004)
- the in-depth experience of communities and key groups affected by the social impact of the border (Harvey et al, 2005)
- a profile of community development projects and family resource centres (South and Mid West Community Development Support Agency, 2006)
- a profile of volunteer-based organizations (Prizeman, 2008)
- an audit of community development in the cross border-region (Harvey, 2008).

Community development research has also begun to engage with Travellers and issues relating to them. Related policy developments included the Report of the

¹² Community Workers Co-operative. 2008. *Occupational Standard for Quality Community Work report: An all-Ireland Statement of Values, Principles and Work Standards*. Community Workers Co-operative: Galway.

¹³ The Wheel. 2008. *First Salary Survey of Ireland's Community, Voluntary and Charity Sector*.

Task Force on the Travelling Community in 1995, the subsequent Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, and the Traveller Health Strategy in 2002.

Despite the fact that community development research from the 1960s to the present has drawn together a wide range of different issues and interests under the broad banner of social and community change, it has not yet addressed the very evident knowledge gap around the number of community workers and the size and scope of the community sector.

1.3 New direction

While community development features in a range of national policy commitments as a strategy for tackling poverty and advancing social inclusion, to date the true size and scope of this sector is unknown. The past five decades has seen much research into various aspects of community development work and it has contributed significantly to knowledge of community development in Ireland.¹⁴ However, there is a dearth of basic data on community development workers that severely restricts our understanding of how community development is used in tackling poverty, creating a clear gap in our knowledge of the full spectrum of community development workers. Given that community development features in a range of national policy commitments as a strategy for tackling poverty and advancing social inclusion, an understanding of the people who are involved in unpaid community development work, such as volunteers; people who are employed as community development workers perhaps by local community groups; and of community organizations that employ community development workers or support posts with community development responsibilities, is need but lacking in existing research.

Despite the strong policy context and the proliferation of community development activities and community development studies there is limited sociological research. For example, in Ireland, there are no national baseline data that gives information on community development workers and their:

¹⁴ Powell, F. and Geoghegan, M. 2004. *The Politics of Community Development: Reclaiming Civil Society or Reinventing Governance*. A&A Farmar: Dublin.

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- numbers
- profile
- employment context
- work settings and responsibilities
- experience
- education and training.

In contrast, surveys of community development workers have been undertaken in the UK and Northern Ireland, including relatively recent surveys (Glen and Pearse, 1998; PAULO, 2001; McMinn and O'Meara, 2002; and Glen et al, 2004). These studies stemmed from lack of general information about the nature of the community work population in the UK and sought to provide overall information on a number of matters such as the number of community workers, their geographic distribution, their employing agency as well as some data on personal characteristics such as age and gender.

Several Irish studies suggest that there is need for research that might show the extent to which community development workers could address poverty or how they might see themselves in this role. This potentially could identify particular ways in which the human capital of community development workers, in terms of skills and technical knowledge, might be strengthened. A key contribution of community workers is their input into animating, facilitating and supporting local people who experience disadvantage to act together to improve their communities. Knowledge of such work on the ground could generate unique and innovative evidence of the contribution of community development workers to community building.

Providing national baseline data on community development workers (in terms of numbers; profile; employment context; work settings and responsibilities; experience; and education and training) could prove significant for the development of policy on community development in Ireland. For example, in the argument for community development funding, the unique knowledge, skills, qualifications, job nature and personal characteristics and qualities could be

defined, substantiated and strengthened. Much empirical research on community development, historically or currently, does not address these issues.

1.4 Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the nature of research in community development in Ireland since the 1960s. It also highlighted a number of gaps in these studies. The main conclusion is that research into community development and community development work in Ireland has shown the need to develop national baseline data on community development workers within the framework of a survey of community development workers. Developing the framework for such a survey is essential if the information base that would be available to help assess the impact of community development as an anti-poverty strategy is to be strengthened.

Chapter 2 Purpose of pilot survey

2.1 Purpose of the pilot survey in relation to the proposed national study

The overall purpose of this pilot study was to explore methodological issues and assess their suitability for use in a national study. Insights gained from the pilot study may help in profiling community development workers, whether they are paid employees in community development work, employed by local groups in particular community settings or employed by statutory bodies that have community development posts or posts whose responsibilities relate to community development.

It might also help profile people who are involved in unpaid community development work, such as volunteers, community activists and members of community groups working in particular contexts or pursuing collective activities on behalf of their communities.

2.2 Research questions

The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the value, focus and format of a national survey of community workers. It sought to answer the following questions:

- Who are community development workers?
- What is their age profile and how many are there?
- What types of community development organizations employ community development workers?

The rationale for these questions was to collect data on the nature of community groups and of individuals that are actively involved in addressing poverty and social exclusion.

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To define and clarify the values and principles that express how a community worker should act in various work roles and with different types of responsibility and accountability, the pilot study sought to answer the following questions:

- What experience and knowledge do community development workers bring to community development work?
- Is there a link between educational qualification in community development work and the different experiences of community development workers?
- What are the most challenging obstacles to career progression for community development workers?
- What can be learned from this that might secure a stable and secure work environment for community development workers?

To assess what values and focus are needed for effective community development work practice, the pilot study sought to answer the following questions:

- Role and work setting – What do community development workers actually do? Where do they work and who do they work with?
- Working strategy – How do community groups plan their work? How do they reflect on their work practice? How do they manage their work performance? How do community groups and organizations recruit, support and supervise their staff?
- What are the essential characteristics of community development practice? What key issues do community development workers need to address? What types of support are most helpful for community development workers?
- How do we know what a community development organization is?

These broad questions were broken down into six response categories, namely:

- Numbers of community development workers and groups
- Profile
- Employment context
- Work settings and responsibilities
- Experience
- Educational qualification and training.

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The lessons from this pilot study may inform the design of a national survey that may broaden knowledge and understanding of the number and types of people who are working to build active communities – whether area based or communities of interest – in Ireland. The initial objectives of the national survey will be to:

- Strengthen the information base available to national, regional and local planners about the nature and extent of community development approaches to tackling poverty and social exclusion;
- Widen the information available for assessing the impact of community development as an anti-poverty strategy;
- Provide information for the development of strategies to strengthen the skills and technical knowledge of community development workers.

This study assesses how successfully the pilot survey, which carried out a self-reporting questionnaire survey in Co Donegal, addressed these objectives.

2.3 Selection of pilot site

This pilot study was set in Co Donegal because of its distinct mix of urban and rural settings. Studies of community development in border regions have shown that it is an area with both an urban and a rural focus of activity (O'Neill and McCaul, 1999). Donegal was selected as the pilot site not just because of cross-border work by voluntary and community organizations but also to find what could be learned from the scale of activity in urban and rural settings that might inform similar activities in a national study.

Chapter 3 Evaluation and methodological framework

3.1 Introduction

The pilot survey of community development workers primarily adopted a survey-based method to probe different methodological issues and gather data in the selected pilot area. Data was sought on the profile of community development workers; their work settings and responsibilities; employment conditions; experience; career paths; provision for equal opportunities; and their training and support needs.

The pilot project had two main elements - an advisory group network and a survey. The advisory group network comprised the establishment of a broadly-based pilot research advisory group, and a local steering group that consisted of community development workers working with a range of people in the community, voluntary and statutory sectors in Donegal.

The survey, consisting of postal and web questionnaires, was issued to:

- Paid community development workers
- Unpaid community development workers or community activists
- Community development organizations.

The survey was conducted by a project researcher, with the guidance of the pilot research advisory group and the local steering group. It was supported by the Projects and Research sections of the Combat Poverty Agency. The pilot study took six months to complete. From April to October 2008 the project researcher carried out the survey design, the fieldwork for both postal and web surveys and the initial data analysis and draft report.

3.1. 1 Construction of advisory group network

The pilot project included various participative processes that informed community development practitioners about the survey and helped identify the questions that were relevant to their own practice and organizational settings.

Pilot Research Advisory group

Purposive sampling was used to select people who were experienced and involved in community development work to be members of the pilot research advisory group. A list was compiled of community development workers nationally based on administrative documents and public data sources such as community organizations' websites. The Projects and Research sections of Combat Poverty advised on the protocol for the selection of advisory group members. Representatives of community organizations were selected based on their degree of involvement in community development issues. Selection included but was not limited to professional community development worker, academics or researchers in community development studies.

An email was sent to community development workers and their organizations inviting them to become a member of the pilot research advisory group. It outlined the aims and objectives of the pilot study and the study proposal. A broadly-based advisory group, which comprised 14 community development practitioners from the community and voluntary and statutory sectors, was set up. The advisory group was formed in June 2008.

Advisory group members were asked to evaluate the draft questionnaires, drawing on their personal, professional and organizational expertise. This process helped to strengthen the questionnaires and to refine the conceptual definition of a community development worker.

The first advisory group meeting addressed the following issues:

- The overall approach of the research project
- The structure of the questionnaires and the effectiveness of the questions
- The definition of community development workers.

Based on feedback from the advisory group on aspects of the methodology and the definition of community development worker, the questionnaires were refined and finalized.

Local Steering Committee: a local network

The use of a Local Steering Group (LSG) was an important aspect of the survey's administration and methodology. This applied particularly to the piloting of the survey in Donegal. The Local Steering Group included stakeholders from the community and voluntary and the statutory sectors in the county.

The Local Steering Group provided the pilot project with local knowledge, which helped, among other things, to identify community development workers, paid and unpaid, in Donegal and their employing or community organizations in the community, voluntary and statutory sectors.

The Local Steering Committee network:

- Advised on the pilot project approach
- Informed the design of the survey questionnaires
- Guided the administration of the questionnaires
- Addressed issues of responses to the questionnaires.

The process of selecting the Local Steering Group (LSG) was similar to that of the pilot research advisory group. The LSG was formed in July 2008 and was convened by Border Action in Letterkenny. It consisted of 13 members drawn from a mixture of the community and voluntary and the statutory sectors.

The rationale for setting up a Local Steering Group was to facilitate the survey's administration, improve methodology and encourage participation among community development workers and organizations. The overall goal was to improve the survey's response rate. The pilot project used the LSG to build contacts with community development workers and collaboration with them, using a 'snowballing' and 'cascading' process of networking. (These terms are discussed later in the text.)

3.1. 2 Defining community development worker

Although there is a range of debate and understandings of community development, there is a broadly agreed definition that is rooted in principles of participation in decision-making and collective action, leading to an agenda of social change for equality, social inclusion and the reduction of poverty.

Pobal, for example, defines community development as being 'a development activity composed of both task and process. The task is the achievement of social change linked to equality and social justice, and the process is the application of the principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision-making in a structured and co-ordinated way'.

The Combat Poverty Agency defines community development as a 'process whereby those who are marginalized and excluded are enabled to gain in self-confidence, to join with others and to participate in actions to change their situation and to tackle the problems that face their community'.

For the purpose of this pilot survey, community development refers to an occupation, both paid and unpaid, that aims to build active and influential communities based on specific values of participation, empowerment, collective action, justice, equality and mutual respect, and which is committed to challenge oppression and tackle poverty and inequality.

What is a community development organization and worker?

Community development action takes place in a variety of settings, across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. In this study, a community development organization is defined as a community-wide organization through which the community may express its thoughts and see that its will is done.

Community development work is defined in this study as an activity that involves working with communities, both in a paid or unpaid capacity, with the aim of building active and influential local communities and communities of interests.

Community development is distinctive in terms of its:

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- **Goals** – participative society, fairness, challenging oppression, inequality and exclusion
- **Values** – empowerment, equality
- **Methods** – collective action, self-help, campaigning, networking, partnership work, research
- **Skills** – facilitation, organization building, group work, promotion and awareness raising, funding, managing.

A further dimension can be added to this definition, which is that of people building the capacity and supporting the development of autonomous, that is, resident- or citizen-driven, community groups or organizations (Taylor, 2006).

The pilot study sought to identify all the community development workers in the pilot area who fitted this definition. It included workers with work remits in community development or with a primary community development responsibility.

In seeking to make the survey representative of the definition of community development workers above (see Figure 1) an integrated approach was used. The role of community development workers in the Irish context was derived from the Combat Poverty Agency-supported work on community work standards. These standards provide a reference framework for all community work stakeholders:

- Workers (paid and voluntary)
- Employers, including management groups
- Communities
- Funders
- Education and training providers.

Two elements are integrated in this approach:

- In referring to community organizations it combines community organizations that have a common interest or identity in a

neighbourhood or place and those which employ community development worker(s),

- It defines as community development workers both paid and unpaid workers who have a remit of a specific location or social issue involving a wide range of roles and tasks.

3.1. 3 Questionnaire design

The questions for the postal and web form surveys were developed after examining previous relevant studies. Following discussions on the drafted questionnaires with members of both the advisory group and, later, the local steering group (see Appendices 1 and 2) the questionnaires were finalised. Feedback about the questionnaire design was received also from two experienced researchers and one community development educationalist.

The pilot study used a project-based research methodology based on community development work practice. The study involved quantitative data collection. There were a number of advantages to using quantitative data collection. It ensured the reliability of gathered data. It also provided through empirical data quantitative profiles of community development workers; explanations of their work settings and responsibilities; the context for their experience; employment conditions; career paths; and their education and training.

It gave more in-depth information about the challenges facing community development workers in terms of administration, funding of projects, decision-making within organizations, staff issues, resources and government and EU policies.

Informed by the characterisation of workers and their roles set out in Figure 1, the questionnaires used a coded questions survey tailored separately to community organizations, to paid community development workers and to unpaid community development workers or community activists. The questionnaires were standardised into a generic community development workers survey consisting of five sections:

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- 1 Personal/organizational characteristics
- 2 Employment context
- 3 Education and training
- 4 Experience
- 5 Work settings and responsibilities
- 6 Organizational management and development.

Constructing a valid and robust survey – key elements

The challenge was to word the questions to gain what we wanted and to be easily understood by all respondents. In writing each question, three things were considered:

- The ethical principles and values of the community development workers for whom the questionnaire was being designed
- The particular purpose of the questionnaire
- How questions were placed in relation to each other in the questionnaire.

The construct validity¹⁵ of each question in the questionnaire was informed by the model in Figure 1. Content validity¹⁶ was ensured by using both open and close-ended questions. Some questions gave response options that were expressed in:

- Rated scales
- Yes/no answers
- Multiple choice options
- Other questions gave relevant response choices but respondents were also free to add another answer.

¹⁵ Construct validity refers to the degree to which we attempt to explain or show how one question on the community development approach is related to the others.

¹⁶ Content validity refers to the degree to which we attempt to frame our questions to reflect the full range of the meaning of the definition or concept being used.

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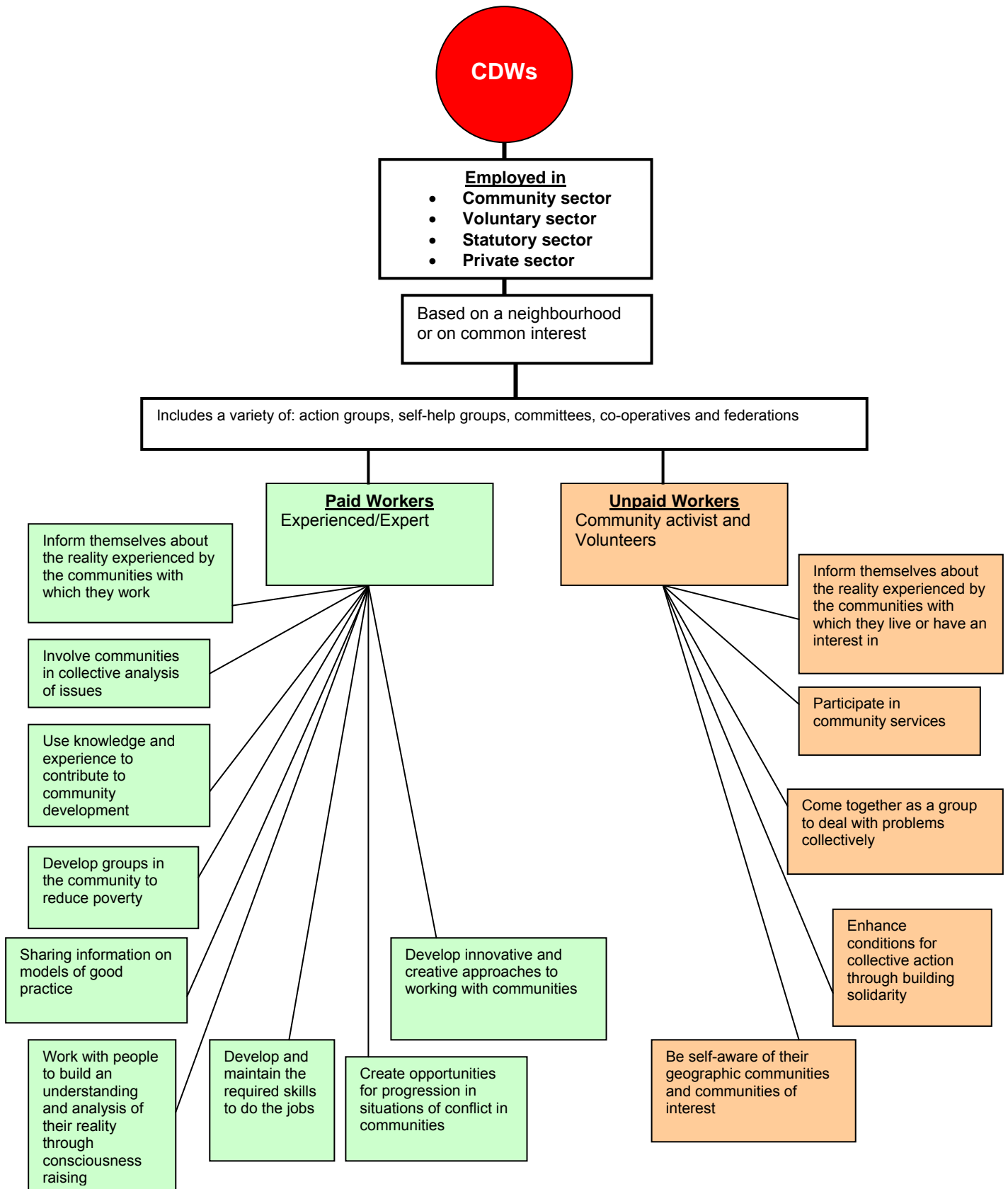


Figure 1: Characterisation of community development workers and their roles (a joined-up approach to community-based values and community development commitment).

3.1. 4 Survey scope

Based on the Figure 1 model, the target population for the community development workers pilot survey was defined as 'community development workers', including those working in a paid and unpaid capacity, in community development organizations in Donegal.

It is important to emphasise that there were a number of difficulties in profiling the total number of community development workers in Donegal. This related, in part, to the time of the year the survey was administered (summer) and to key changes to the context and practice of community development in Ireland since the 1990s (this is discussed in the literature review). It reflected the variety of policy contexts in which community development workers carry out their work in Donegal.

There is also the fact that not all workers with 'community development' in their job titles actually practise community development. Conversely, many who are not named as community development workers do take community development approaches or do community development work (see Glen et al. 2004). Thus, it was sometimes difficult to determine who should be included in the samples.

3.1. 5 Who was included in the samples of community development workers in County Donegal?

Community development workers self-identified themselves in the research. Each respondent to the questionnaire was asked to state their community development job or work title. Though this method had drawbacks, it allowed for the identification of community development tasks or roles in community development work. Given that a community development worker is likely to have more than one role and task, it may be advisable in a national survey to extend its range to include a wide variety of community development job titles or positions.

Categorising respondents requires more than the identification of their job title or the relationship of their post to community development work. It also imposed a

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particular error on the pilot data. However, although self-identification is not an objective method, it reflects the post or job title of those who actually see themselves as community development organizations and workers.

From the final sample community development workers and organizations consistent with the research definition and model were identified. They included:

- Community development work provided by professionals whose post played a key role in community development activity;
- Community development work carried out voluntarily by local residents;
- Community development work carried out by community leaders in a group;
- Those who support community development work;
- Community development work with a focus on particular target groups;
- Community groups with a community development work remit.

To test the self-identification method as a means of identifying community development workers, the information provided by those who identified themselves in the pilot questionnaires was analysed. This method raised some ethical issues about whether a questionnaire returned on the basis of self-identification did define a community development worker or not, since a self-identification method does shape the findings. However, the range of respondents who identified their roles and tasks as belong to community development work provided diverse and interesting information.

3.1. 6 Estimating total potential sample of community development workers in County Donegal

As part of the process of estimating the total potential sample and building the sample, the LSG was used for 'snowballing' and 'cascading' networking techniques. A statistical method also was used to estimate the total potential sample. In addition, published and internet data sources were consulted in the sample building process. Each of these techniques is described below.

The variety of separate techniques used in estimating and building the potential total sample of community development workers enabled us to compare and

verify our methods in order to strengthen the validity of the evaluation. This process of using various independent techniques, so that a weakness in one method can be avoided by using a second method that is strong in the area in which the first method is weak, is called triangulation. The use of the LSG and of published and internet data sources provided information that helped build the cohort of community development workers and community development organizations. The statistics techniques was used to verify the number of community development workers (both paid and unpaid) that would need to be included and also the number that needed to be sampled for the sample to be reliable.

Local Steering Group strategy and the use of ‘snowballing’

Building the sample for the pilot survey of community development workers was a snowballing, multi-stage process. The goal was to create a comprehensive and robust cohort of community development workers that reflected the unique urban and rural settings that characterise this county. The strategy of setting up and consulting a Local Steering Group (LSG) helped in identifying the maximum number of community development workers in the community and voluntary and the statutory sectors.

A number of key aspects of the LSG strategy included:

- Participation of LSG members in the pilot study,
- Relaying information about the survey to the intended respondents in target organizations,
- building awareness,
- assisting in the administration of the questionnaires.

For example, targeted efforts¹⁷ were used to inform key community organizations about the pilot study and address their concerns on the draft questionnaires. The LSG members served as important intermediaries in gaining

¹⁷ Targeting is a mechanism used to focus on the sample group or unit you wish to reach, whether it is people, organizations or other things. In this case it was community development workers in Donegal in order to administer the survey.

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co-operation from community development organizations. Through the LSG, lists of community development organizations or workers were compiled.

Initially, the questionnaires were issued to LSG members at their first meeting. They were encouraged to pass on the questionnaires to other community development organizations. They were asked also to encourage community development organizations to pass on the questionnaires to their own paid and unpaid community development workers, thus creating a virtual 'snowball' sample. This approach ensured that the survey reached different community organizations and community development workers in the country.

Although the snowballing process was the preferred method for building a total sample, it had a number of drawbacks. A subset of LSG members were unable to provide information on the total number of questionnaires sent out. This figure was needed to confirm the total number of samples for the pilot study, because that number may differ from the number of respondents, especially if a 'returned questionnaires' list is used as a justification for the total sample. As a result of the snowballing strategy used in this survey, it was difficult to estimate a denominator¹⁸ for the total potential sample.

The first shortcoming of this method is fairly straightforward. If a member of the LSG does not know how many questionnaires have been distributed, that sample cannot be estimated in the survey. This means that the response rate cannot be measured. One might argue that it is fairly rare for every member of the LSG not to know the amount of questionnaires distributed.

The choice of a random survey also significantly affected the estimation of the potential sample reached through the snowballing strategy. For example, even for those LSG members who told us the amount of questionnaires they had distributed, there was a likely chance that they would distribute the questionnaires only to community development workers and organizations they knew well. Therefore, many of the questionnaires distributed by the LSG

¹⁸ The denominator, in this case, is the total number of community development workers at County Donegal.

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members were likely to exclude certain workers and organizations from the survey. The problem was that the survey was not about any one specific type of community development worker or organization –the pilot survey related to community development workers in Donegal. Therefore it was likely that a random sample – and the snowballing strategy, in this case, applied to the random sample – would exclude many community development workers and organizations from the survey.

To assess how severe this problem was likely to be, the extent to which the total samples from the snowballing technique were clustered among certain community development workers in the survey area was examined. A simple example will illustrate this. An LSG member said she had distributed three questionnaires to three community development workers she worked with (one questionnaire for unpaid and two for paid workers). If a total of 15 paid and unpaid questionnaires were distributed by the five LSG members that came to the initial meeting and each had distributed three questionnaires, the questionnaires would not have been distributed evenly.

Those who would have been sampled would have been within the LSG members' own community organizations, and nearly all of the community development workers sample would have been within one electoral area of the county. So on average this would not have given us a truly representative result.

Therefore, although it might have seemed that the snowballing method for sampling community development workers in Donegal would work fine, in fact in terms of generating a representative sample and an accurate picture, it is not such a good methodology.

When the snowballing methodology is compared to our model described in Figure 1 and based on our definition of community development worker and community organization, it can be concluded that it worked reasonably well. The rationale for this is that we were able to co-ordinate and distribute the questionnaire within the framework of our model and definition.

Local Steering Group strategy and the use of 'cascading'

On the basis that a total response rate would be difficult to measure from the snowballing technique, a cascading technique was also used through the LSG. This involved building a contact list through 'cascading networking'. The cascading networking was closely co-ordinated by the researcher with a view to developing comprehensive lists of potential community development worker respondents.

As part of the cascading networking process, three of the 13 members of the LSG working in the statutory sector dealing with community organizations were asked to provide contact email addresses of community development workers in the organization they worked for and represented on the LSG. Through this the List Building System (LBS) developed. In part, this allowed for cascading network sampling, whereby a new contact could be 'spilled' or 'cascaded' from an original contact.

Using this method, after contact lists were compiled, we sent out questionnaires to community development workers and organizations on the list with a cover letter stating the purpose and benefits of the survey and asking them to send a list of all community development workers they knew in their section or department, including the community groups they worked with. These new entities were contacted and entered on the list throughout the sample building period of the study. In these cases, the new sample was automatically linked to the original snowballing sample for documentation purposes. Through this, the database of the total number of questionnaires sent out and potential respondents was built up.

The cascading networking technique improved on the snowballing technique and allowed us to record the number of questionnaires that were sent out and to measure the response rate. Ensuring the return of the questionnaires was cumbersome, however, as many people on the contact lists were on holiday when the survey was being administered. In this situation, the use of cascading networking to secure a good response rate was a little problematic but overall it proved to be reliable.

Furthermore, several of the community organizations that responded to the questionnaires were well known to the three LSG members who gave us the initial lists. This meant that it was possible to trace any questionnaire that had not been returned. The cascading networking technique was particularly effective with this type of pilot sample where respondents to the questionnaires were diverse and geographically dispersed.

The list building process and the cascading networking techniques were important because they secured representativeness and the participation of community development workers and organizations in the survey. It was particularly effective in providing a profile consistent with the research project's definitions and model of community development (see Figure 1) and adapted for the pilot project. In other words, it was possible to locate a broad range of community development organizations and workers in Donegal.

If snowball or cascade techniques were to be used again, a reliable indicator of who to survey (in terms of their population, opinions and changes over time) must be created first. This is to assess the reliability of the survey before snowball or cascade networking techniques are used. Two approaches might help in this process. Firstly, a less structured approach to data collection may need to be used - for example, unstructured interviews through regional focus groups. This could help build a better understanding of the sample by learning, through the eyes of this regional group, their concerns, their numbers and their characteristics. This also could be very helpful in developing relevant and appropriately worded questions for the survey.

A second approach would be to use case studies from the group to be surveyed that also would be gained via focus groups. This would help to verify how meaningful the questions for the survey were and create more certainty about the study population and then build the sample for a national survey via the snowball and cascade networking techniques and regional focus groups.

Published and internet database sources

Published and internet data sources helped us build the cohort of community development workers and organizations in the survey area. Internet data sources were useful in identifying additional community groups and community development workers, particularly the information and articles posted on Donegal County Council’s website under the ‘*Donegal Community Audit 2005*’ which showed two directories of community and voluntary groups in Donegal.

The data collected through the triangulated use of the different techniques described identified a total of 40 paid community development workers, 35 unpaid community development workers and 40 community development organizations in the community and voluntary and the statutory sectors. Of these, 35 paid community development workers, 20 unpaid community development workers and 20 community development organizations were contacted by electronic and postal mail (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1 Sample number identified from different data sources

Sample number identified for different data collection techniques			
Techniques	Number/% of Paid CDWs	Number/% of Unpaid CDWs	Number/% of Community Development Organizations
Snowballing	5 (13%)	3 (9%)	6 (15%)
Cascading networking	26 (64%)	30 (85%)	23 (57%)
Published/Internet sources	9 (23%)	2 (6%)	11 (28%)

Table 2 Sample number contacted from different data sources

Sample building number contacted for different data collection techniques			
Techniques	Number/% of Paid CDWs	Number/% of Unpaid CDWs	Number/% of Community Development Organizations
Snowballing	3 (9%)	1 (5%)	6 (30%)

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Cascading networking	26 (76%)	17 (85%)	11 (55%)
Published/Internet sources	5 (15%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)

The reason the three techniques mentioned above were used in building the sample of community development workers and organizations was to identify as many community development workers as possible from community, voluntary and statutory sector sources (as informed by our model in figure 2).

Since many samples of community development workers and organizations are included under the three sources listed above, duplication was inevitable. To eliminate duplication, the list of those contacted was recorded onto an Excel spreadsheet for continual review. The information on the spreadsheet could be sorted under the name of the community development organization, the community development worker and the source whereby it was identified. The entries on this list were reviewed manually to check for any duplication. The duplicate entries were dropped to ensure that each worker or organization was included only once in the sample.

The snowballing and cascading techniques and the database sources allowed potential respondents to the survey to be identified from community and voluntary sector and statutory sector sources, thus maximising the pilot survey’s coverage of community development workers.

Statistical method for estimating sample of CDWs in Donegal

To determine the total number of community development workers in Donegal, the total potential sample of community development workers was estimated. The mean sample size method of estimation was used to do this in a way that was consistent with our model in Figure 1.

The mean sample size, in this case, refers to the number of community development workers in Donegal. The appropriate mean sample size for estimating community development workers in Donegal was determined largely by two research or methodological factors:

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- the desired level of confidence in our sample and
- the acceptable margin of error in our sample.

The sample size required can be calculated according to the following formula.

$$s = (z / e)^2$$

Description:

s = required sample size

z = confidence level at 95% (standard value of 1.96)

e = margin of error at 20% (standard value of 0.2)

In the pilot survey of community development workers in Donegal, it was estimated that there would be roughly a 20 per cent (0.2) margin of error in estimating the mean size of the community development workers in the county. This figure was taken because only a proportion of community development workers in Donegal might participate in the survey given that the six-months taken to complete the study included the summer holiday period. Use of the standard values listed above provided the following calculation.

Calculation:

$$s = (1.96/0.2)^2$$

$$s = (9.8)^2$$

$$s = 96.04$$

$$s = 96$$

In other words, it is estimated that there are 96 community development workers (both paid and unpaid) in Co. Donegal.

3.1. 7 Feedback from the questionnaire

In an effort to gain a better feedback on the design of the questionnaires, respondents were asked when completing the questionnaire to give their general reaction to the questions presented. Each respondent was encouraged to

provide feedback on the pilot survey to inform the broader survey. The Feedback Form carried six questions, and was attached to the back of each questionnaire.

Time taken to fill in the questionnaire

In an effort to gain better insight into the amount of time it took to fill in the questionnaire, respondents were divided into three categories. This showed the time taken by respondent to complete the questionnaire for paid workers, for unpaid workers and by respondents completing the questionnaire for community organizations. The time taken by each respondent to complete the questionnaire was entered into SPSS statistical software, expressed in minutes, in order to find the average mean time taken by all the respondents to fill in the questionnaires.

Paid worker questionnaire

The average time taken by respondents to fill in the questionnaire for paid workers was 42 minutes (based on the returns from a paper-based survey) and 33 minutes (based on the returns of an on-line, web-based survey). The maximum time taken to complete the paper-based questionnaire for paid workers was 90 minutes (fully completed) and the minimum time was 15 minutes (not fully completed). The maximum time taken to fill in the web-based questionnaire for paid workers was 62 minutes (fully completed) and the minimum time was 10 minutes (not fully completed).

The optimal length of a questionnaire for both paper and web questionnaires has always been a controversial topic. As a general rule, the length of a questionnaire should be based on a minimum period required to successfully cover the necessary topics. From this point of view, the median time taken to completely fill out the questionnaire in both the paper and web-based samples was still not excessive, at 45 minutes.

Unpaid worker questionnaire

The average time taken by respondents to completely fill in the questionnaire for unpaid workers was 38 minutes (based on the returns of the paper-based survey) and 35 minutes (based on the returns of on-line, web-based survey).

The maximum time taken to completely fill in the paper-based questionnaire for

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unpaid workers was 50 minutes and the minimum time was 20 minutes (not fully completed). The maximum time taken to completely fill in the web-based questionnaire for unpaid workers was 33 minutes and the minimum time was 15 minutes (not fully completed).

Community organization questionnaire

The average time taken by respondents to completely fill in the community organization questionnaire was 31 minutes (based on the returns of the paper-based survey) and 32 minutes (based on the returns of an on-line, web-based survey). The maximum time taken to completely fill in the paper-based community organization questionnaire was 60 minutes and the minimum time was 15 minutes (not fully completed). The maximum time taken to completely fill in the web-based questionnaire survey was 35 minutes and the minimum time was 15 minutes (not fully completed).

General reaction to the questions presented in the questionnaires

Feedback from the survey indicated that most respondents found the questionnaire easy to complete. The results, identifying key or significant feedback, are listed below.

Paid Questionnaire

<u>No of replies</u>	<u>Some quotations from the feedback received</u>
5	Questions were OK and clear
5	Reasonable and clear
3	Fairly positive and clear
3	Questions OK and not problematic
2	Questions were generally OK but some were tedious
1	Very good, easy to read and answer
1	Too wide ranging and some questions are too personal.

Unpaid Questionnaire

<u>No of replies</u>	<u>Some quotations from the feedback received</u>
2	Questions were clear but very general
2	Most questions were OK

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- 2 Most questions were OK but some questions took a lot of time
- 1 Some questions were repetitive
- 1 Reasonable but too advanced for someone with low literacy or education.

Community organization Questionnaire

<u>No of replies</u>	<u>Some quotations from the feedback received</u>
2	Questions were very good
1	Generally OK but a little confusing
1	The questions were ok, and not problematic
1	Some questions repetitive
1	Reasonable but too advanced for someone with low literacy or education
1	A little vague.

Some of the feedback indicated that respondents were not totally clear about some of the questions, for example, a few suggested that some of the questions were too advanced for a person with low levels of literacy or education and were vague. This might possibly be avoided if some research topics were removed from the questionnaire and replaced by another data collection method, such as verification workshops, which might be reliable. However, the overall response to the design of the questionnaires was quite positive. Further studies should aim to have a shorter questionnaire and, most importantly, use a variety of methods for data collection.

Issues relating to community work or community development in Ireland not included in the questions

Paid worker questionnaire

When asked to provide feedback on any issues relating to community work or community development in Ireland that were not included in the questionnaire, 95 per cent of the respondents to the paid worker questionnaire stated that questions either were in line or that no issue had been left out. However, five per cent of the paid worker respondents stated that the issue of difficulties in

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paid workers and unpaid community activists working together should be included in the questionnaire and that questions about the impact of the Community Employment Scheme on community development work should be included.

Unpaid worker questionnaire

When respondents to the unpaid community development worker questionnaire were asked to provide feedback on any issues relating to community work or community development in Ireland that were not included in the questionnaire, 88 per cent replied, 'not that I can think of'. Twelve per cent raised the following issues:

- Lack of training and support for workers
- Lack of recognition
- Lack of opportunities to come together.

Community organization questionnaire

When respondents to the community development organization questionnaire were asked to provide feedback on any issues relating to community work or community development in Ireland that were not included in the questionnaire, 95 per cent replied, 'none'. Five per cent raised the following issues:

- Status of employment contracts
- Conditions of employment.

As indicated above, one of the problems in interpreting the issues that respondents said should be included in a future survey is the possibility that certain types of respondents are evaluating their questionnaire in the light of general community development work. Most of the issues that were raised were included in other questionnaires the respondents did not complete, for example status of employment contracts and conditions of employment were included in the questionnaire for paid workers but not in the community organization questionnaire. So it was not surprising that some of the community development organization respondents suggested it.

The way in which data was collected via three surveys has affected some of the respondents. It is difficult to know how to deal with this problem since the reason we had three surveys was to maximise the degree to which it was representative of community development workers and organizations. Perhaps a reasonable compromise would be to inform respondents that there are three surveys.

Difficult questions in the questionnaires

A. Paid worker questionnaire

Employment context

Question 13 sought to find out the salary before tax of paid community development workers. Of the total number of paid worker respondents, 22 per cent chose not to reveal their basic salary. This indicates that there are sensitive issues in collecting this information and for these respondents it is seen as 'personal' or they did not want to answer it.

Work settings and responsibilities

Question 44 sought to find out the amount of time that paid community development workers spent on a work setting over a period of week. Twenty-two per cent of respondent indicated that, given the varied roles that community development workers play, it would be difficult to break down this time on a weekly basis. Many suggested that this difficulty could be overcome if it were on a monthly basis.

B. Unpaid worker questionnaire

There are some problems asking the respondents to answer questions 25, 26 and 27, which sought to find out the experiences of unpaid workers. Thirty-three per cent of respondents said they found it hard to relate to the questions as there were so many technical terms used and the questions were not clear as a result. In particular, one respondent stated that, 'the questions are very general and wasn't really set out for people who contribute to various groups and organizations'.

C. Community organization questionnaire

Organization strategy

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Question 8 sought to find out if the community organization had an ongoing relationship with state or development agencies whose plan or agenda had an impact on community development. One respondent stated that the question was unclear but completed the question. This suggested that the question might need to be rephrased.

Staff and training

There are some problems with this important set of questions 32 and 33 due to unsatisfactory questionnaire coding. For example, two respondents indicated the need to substitute the word 'often' instead of 'always' in that it is rare that anything happens 'always'. However, those two respondents were able to fill in the questions indicating 'sometimes'. As a result the analysis was not seriously affected.

What would help if you were asked to complete similar questionnaire in the future?

A majority (67 per cent) of all respondents that completed the questionnaires (paid, unpaid and community organization questionnaires) replied to this question that they were not sure but suggested that the questionnaires should be made shorter. Other respondents who provided feedback (12 per cent) indicated that the questionnaire should be made a lot clearer. Other 21 per cent of respondents did not provide any comment.

Are there any other comments you wish to make about the design?

Feedback on the pilot survey suggested there were at least two sources of significant frustration in the design of the questionnaire – too long a questionnaire (i.e. 15 per cent of all respondents indicated that the questionnaire was too long) and the technicality of filling in the questionnaire. Specifically, respondents' frustration was observed from the following:

- Inability to place a tick in the tick boxes on the paper-based survey – this was described by one respondent as 'very frustrating',
- Inability to uncheck the answers to the questions on the web-based survey.

Summary

The survey was designed to cover a lot of information and to be extended to a national survey that would help broaden and deepen knowledge of the people engaged in building active local communities – community development workers and interest communities. Most respondents understood the meaning of the questions and what the survey sought to find out. Clearly, good use was made of the Advisory and Steering Groups' comments in identifying key issues for exploration.

The sample building techniques of snowballing and cascading networking, used for building the sample size of community development workers, posed a unique challenge. Given that the survey was conducted in summer there were limitations to the use of these techniques in reaching community development workers who were on holidays. For example, up to October 2008, emails continued to be received from various individuals selected for the survey who apologised or their inability to complete the questionnaire due to being on holidays. In light of this, the timing of a national survey would be very important. However, given the circumstances during the period when the survey was administered, the techniques helped to build a more robust cohort sample of community development workers that was representative of our model and of community development workers in Donegal.

While the snowball and cascade techniques were used in building pilot study data, they are especially useful for building a strata of community development worker respondents, both paid and unpaid, through the Local Steering Group. A major problem in the survey was the absence of a connection between the questionnaire survey and other means of collecting data such as verification workshops or interview for particular networks of community development workers. In future studies snowball and cascade techniques should be combined with other methods that might serve to determine who the survey sample should be from the outset. This is especially important for survey analysis.

A multi-pronged strategy to identify potential respondents should be used in future studies when attempting to maximise the number of eligible respondents

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for the survey. This strategy might include those that have been used in the pilot study; the use of self identification and collection of lists of eligible persons through 'list building'. In summary, it may be appropriate to use a range of research methods for identifying, collecting, organizing and analysing a future study. This would allow potential respondents to be targeted and identified through varied sources, thus maximising the total number of community development workers that respond.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1. Introduction

This report uses a 95 per cent confidence interval for estimates, which means that there is a 95 per cent reliable chance of surveying the true population value of community development workers in Donegal. Although the pilot study is too small to provide true figures of community development workers it can contribute to an estimate of the picture.

4.2 Response rate

The following questionnaires were sent out by the Combat Poverty Agency to the three target categories:

- 20 community organization questionnaires to community development organizations,
- 35 paid community development worker questionnaires to paid community development workers,
- 20 unpaid community development worker questionnaires to unpaid workers/community activists.

The response was as follows:

- Seven community organization questionnaires were completed and returned (total response rate of 35 per cent),
- 20 paid community development worker questionnaires were completed and returned (total response rate of 57 per cent)
- Eight unpaid community development worker questionnaires were completed and returned (total response rate of 40 per cent) (see table 3).

The number of community development workers in the survey is based on the returns of the postal (paper-based) and the on-line (web-based) survey form.

Table 3 Survey response rate estimation

Survey response rate estimation			
	Number sent out	Number returned and received	% of response rate
Community organization questionnaire	20	7	35%
Paid community development worker questionnaire	35	20	57%
Unpaid community development worker questionnaire	20	8	40%
Total	75	35	47%

Of the 75 questionnaires sent out 36 were issued in MS Word via electronic email. This represents 48 per cent of the total of questionnaires issued. In addition, a total of 39 questionnaires, or 52 per cent of the 75 issued were attached to an email as an on-line web survey.

In total, 60 per cent of the postal survey was returned and 40 per cent of the on-line web survey was returned. The postal survey was tracked, with the assistance of Border Action in Letterkenny, by contacting respondents by email to return the questionnaires. This explains the higher 'returned' percentage. These numbers were determined through the LSG strategy of snowballing and cascading network techniques and using published/internet sources as discussed above.

Table 4 Postal and on-line web survey estimation

Postal and on-line web survey estimation				
	Number sent out	% sent out	Number returned	% returned
Postal survey	36	48%	21	60%
on-line web survey	39	52%	14	40%
Total	75	100%	35	100%

Because a sample was surveyed and not the whole (96) statistically estimated mean size of community development workers in Donegal the assumption is that there is less confidence in the results (if all 96 were surveyed, 100 per cent confidence could be assumed).

4.3. Profile of community development workers in Donegal

Percentages are used to explore the profile of community development workers in these survey findings. This makes sense as the research is attempting to get a representative sense of the total population of community development workers in Donegal.

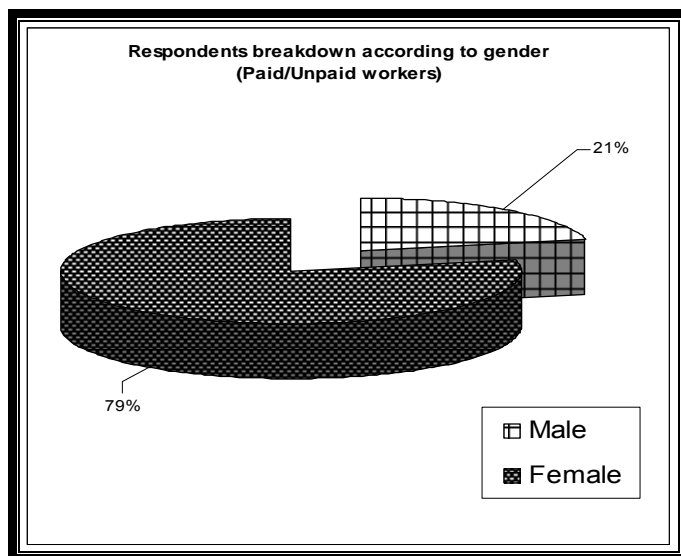
4.3.1 Gender/Age profile

From the survey, female respondents (79 per cent) outnumbered male respondents (21 per cent) (see Graph 1). The age range of community development workers (both paid and unpaid) who responded to the survey extended from 20–29 years to the over-70 age category. The majority (84 per cent) were aged between 30 to 59 years (see Graph 2). Given the likelihood that many people aged below 20 years may be involved in education, a higher representation of this category could not be expected (see Table 5).

Of paid community development worker who responded, a large number fall into the 30 to 39 years age range (representing 35 per cent of the total paid community development workers surveyed), A further 30 per cent of paid community development workers surveyed fall into 40 to 49 years age range with five out of 20 (25 per cent) in the 50 to 59 years age range. However, a smaller number (5 per cent) of paid community development workers surveyed fall into the 20 to 29 age bracket (see Graph 3). This might suggest an 'ageing

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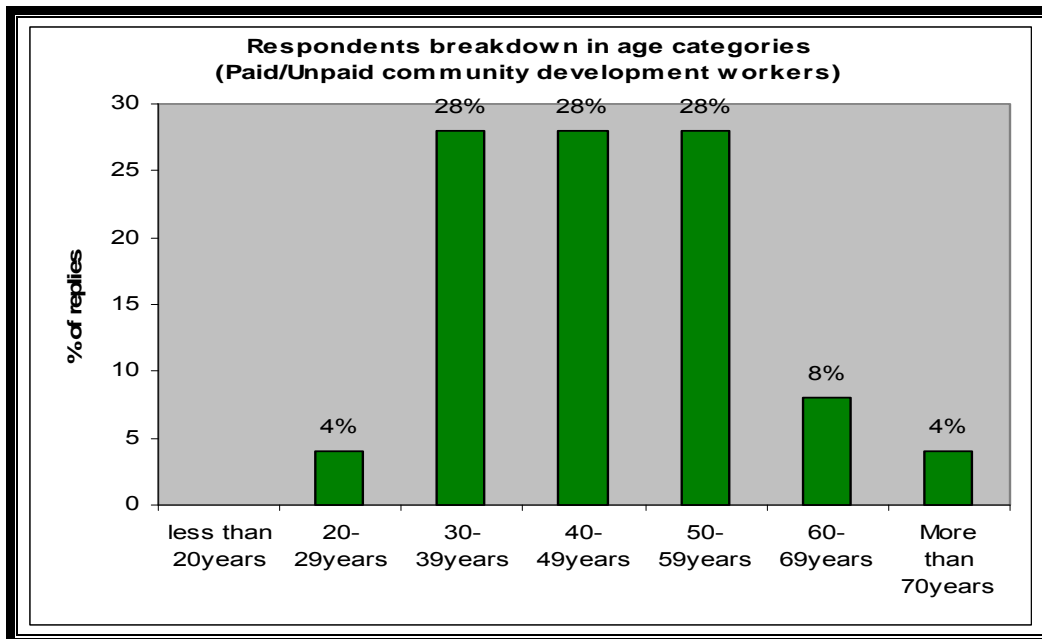
workforce' with younger people not opting for community development work as a career. An ageing workforce might also reflect a reality or view about the level of life experience or maturity required to perform community development work effectively. However, how to attract young people and men into community development work seems a key issue in Donegal.



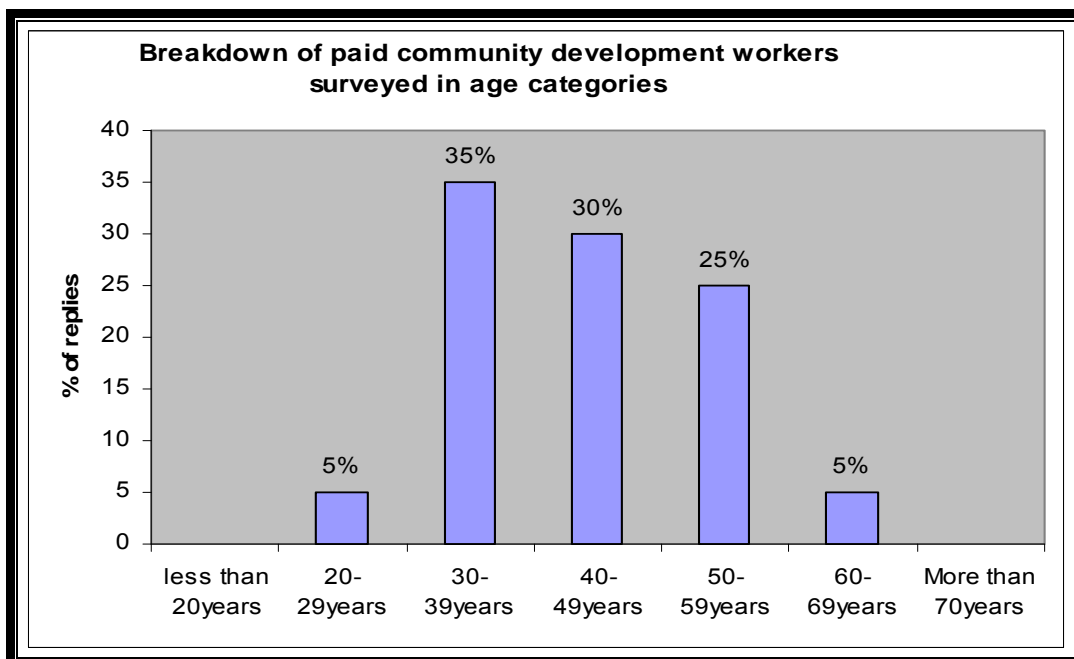
Graph 1 Respondents' gender breakdown

Table 5 Breakdown of respondents' age/gender

Respondents age category	Paid workers		unpaid workers	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
less than 20years	0	0	0	0
20-29years	0	4	0	0
30-39years	7	17	0	4
40-49years	4	17	0	7
50-59years	7	10	4	7
60-69years	0	4	0	4
More than 70years	0	0	0	4
Total percentage of CDW	18%	52%	4%	26%



Graph 2 Respondents in age categories

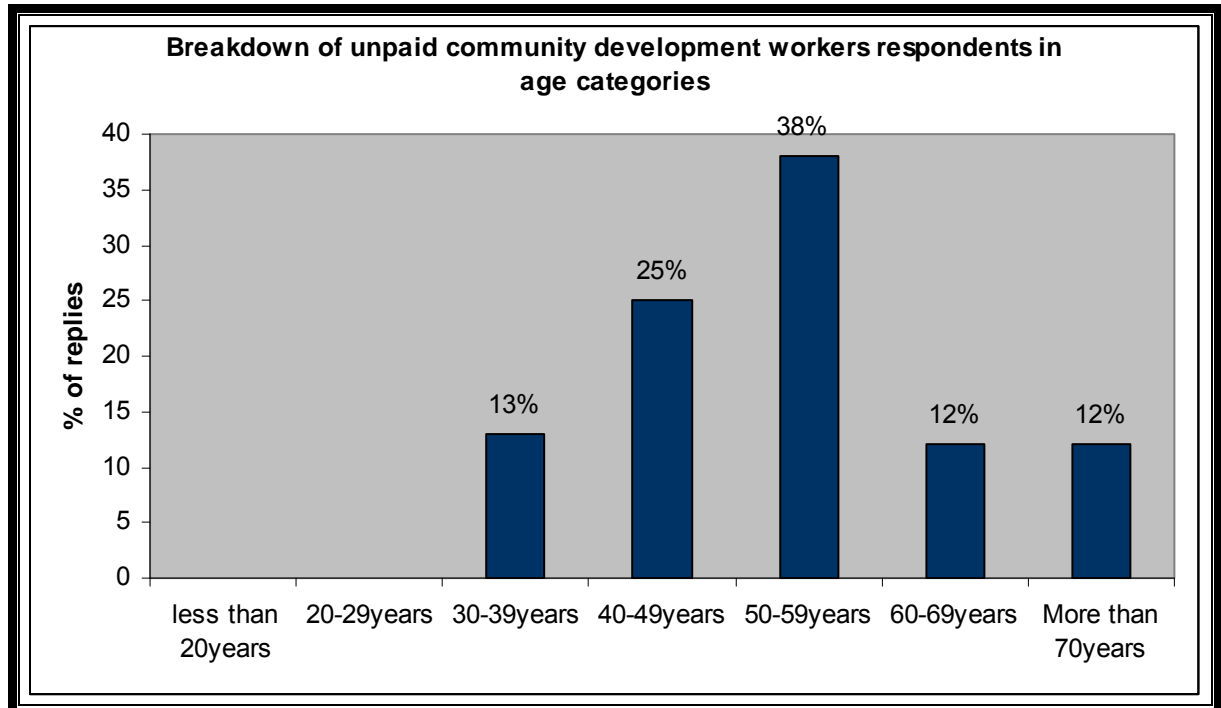


Graph 3 Breakdown of paid community development workers surveyed in age categories

From Table 5 and Graph 4, it can be seen that 38 per cent of unpaid community development worker respondents fall into the 50 to 59 age range. A further 24 per cent of unpaid community development workers in the survey fall into the 60 to 69 age range and the over-70 age bracket. It can be said that there are age-related differences between paid and unpaid community development workers as observed in the survey (see Graph 4). The main point to be taken from the

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survey result is that the percentage (12 per cent) of unpaid community development workers drops for females after the over-70 age group but after the age of 50 to 59 years for males.



Graph 4 Breakdown of unpaid community development workers in age categories

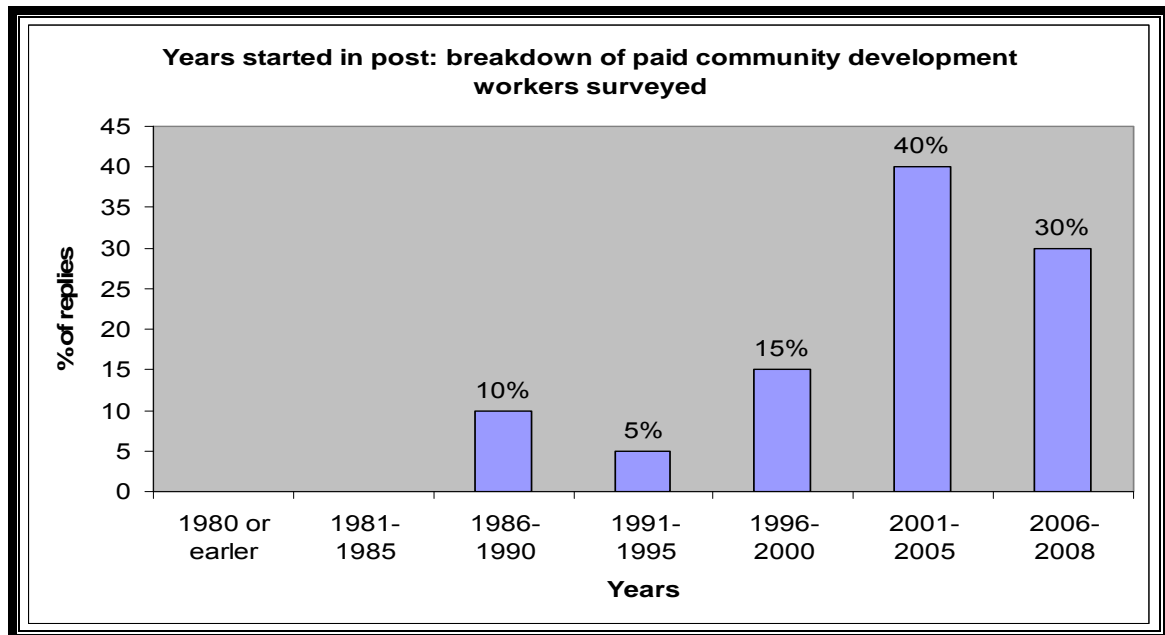
4. 3. 2. Ethnicity/Identity

Respondents were asked to indicate their ethnic background. The questionnaire included five categories of ethnic or cultural background. The survey showed a majority proportion of White Irish (96 per cent) paid community development workers and four per cent Black/African American ethnic groups working as paid community development workers. When the ethnicity is examined in relation to paid and unpaid community development workers, proportionally the breakdowns indicate four per cent from the Black/African American category working in a paid capacity. All unpaid community development workers in the survey are White Irish. However, this result may be due simply to the small number of unpaid community development workers in the survey. Other ethnic categories were not represented in the survey responses (details of the ethnic categories used in the questionnaires are in the Appendix).

4. 3. 3. Duration in post / community activism

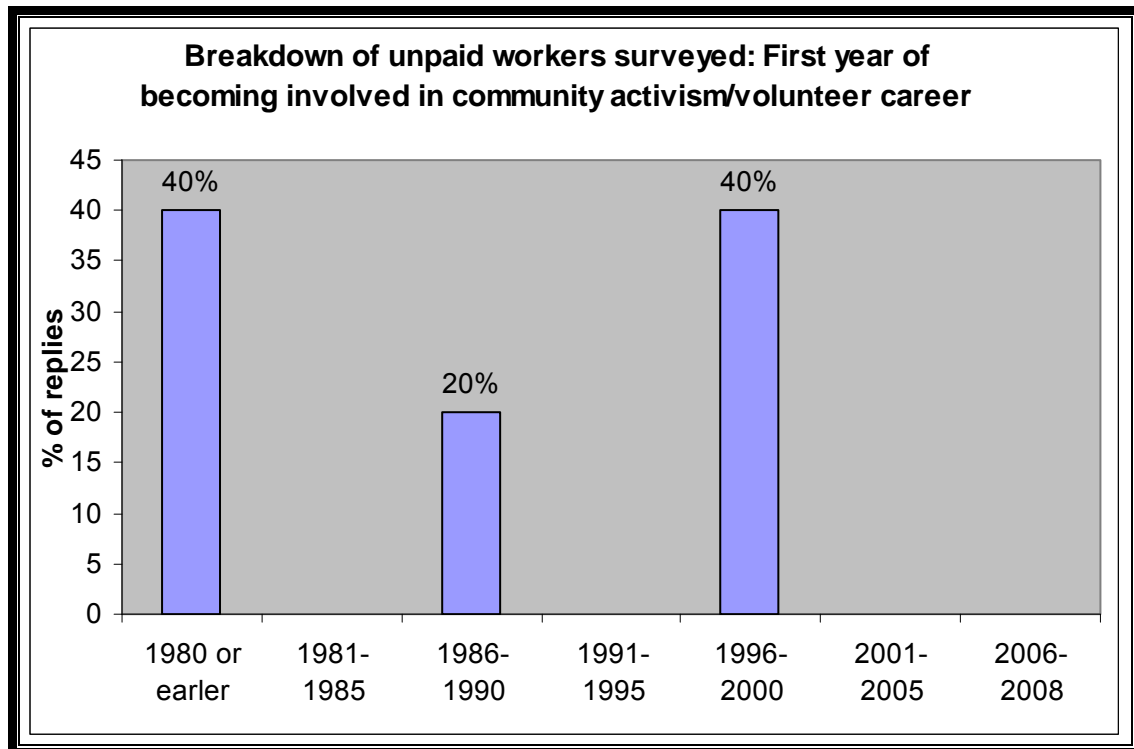
Paid community development workers were asked to indicate the year they started in their post. Graph 5 shows that almost 10 per cent of respondents started in their paid post in the period 1986–1990; five per cent started between 1991 and 1995, and 15 per cent started between 1996 and 2000. Forty per cent of paid workers surveyed started in their job between 2001 and 2005, while almost a third of the paid workers surveyed (30 per cent) started between 2006 and 2008 (see Graph 5). The profile of paid community development workers emerging from the survey indicates that a number of paid community development posts became available in the period 2001 to 2008. In this context, it could be argued that issues affecting career patterns and choice among professional community development workers during the economic boom helped bring about the significant percentage of community development workers choosing a career in community development work from the late 1990s.

The administration of the Peace I and II programmes is likely to have been a key factor (see Harvey, 2003). A series of measures were implemented under Peace I and Peace II in the border region. These included developing pathways to inclusion, integration and reconciliation among target groups in the border region; addressing weak infrastructure; the needs of children and young people; positive action for women; new skills and opportunities; and business competitiveness (see [www. borderaction.ie](http://www.borderaction.ie)).



Graph 5 Years started in post – breakdown of paid community development workers surveyed

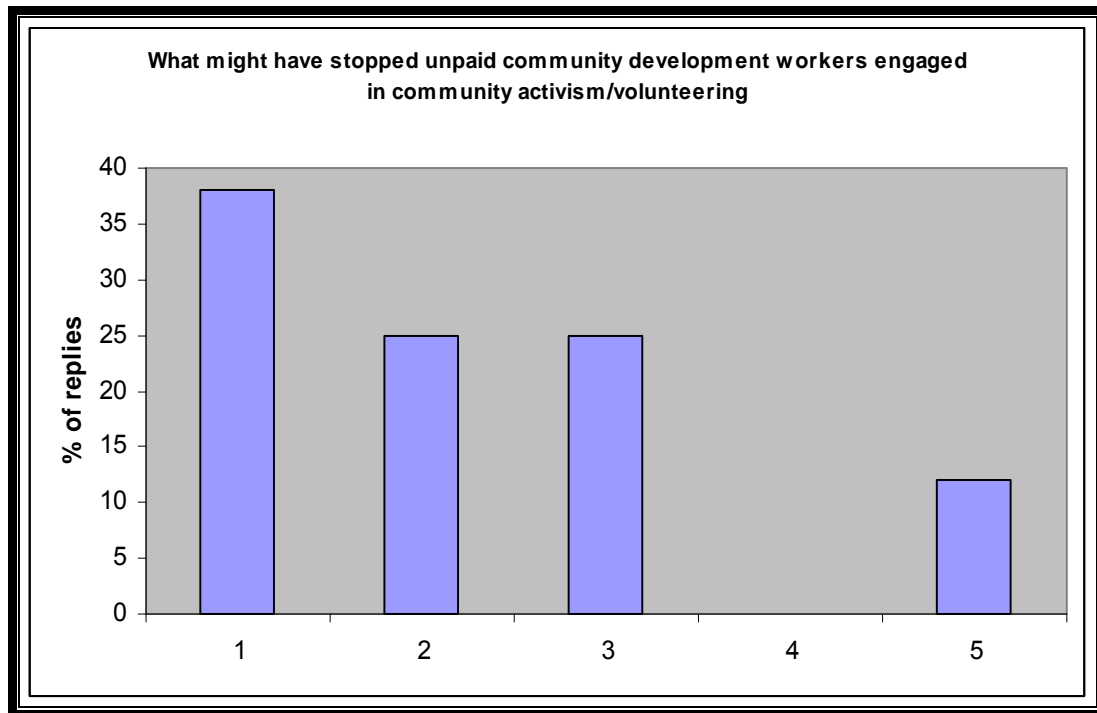
With regard to unpaid community development workers, respondents were asked to indicate when they first became involved in community activism or volunteering. Of those who responded, 40 per cent became engaged in community activism since 1980 or earlier; 20 per cent in the period 1986 to 1990; and between a quarter and a fifth (20 per cent) started between 1996 and 2000 (see Graph 6). The survey showed that unpaid community development work in Donegal may be experiencing radical transformation in the nature of those who engage in community activism or volunteering (given the sample size in this survey, this claim still needs to be tested). The key point from the survey results is that the economic boom of the 1990s in Ireland meant that the traditional paths to a volunteering career that prevailed in the 1980s may be increasingly rare since 2001.



Graph 6 First years becoming involved in community activism or volunteering – breakdown of unpaid community development workers surveyed

All of these respondents were asked to indicate if they were regularly active in community activism or volunteering. From the survey, a quarter (25 per cent) said ‘Yes, they had been regularly involved’, while 75 per cent indicated ‘No they had not been regularly involved’.

Those who indicated ‘No’ were asked what might have stopped them from engaging in community activism or volunteering. Because there might have been to number of reasons, they were asked to tick all boxes that applied. The questionnaire included five categories of reasons. Family and caring responsibilities (38 per cent) was the largest response category; 25 per cent indicated deeper involvement in other activities, while work commitment and full-time employment represented 25 per cent while 15 per cent of the respondents who indicated No did not tick any of the boxes (see Graph 7).



1. Family and caring responsibilities
2. Deeper involvement in other activities
3. Work commitment/full time employment
4. Health problems
5. No boxes ticked

Graph 7 Breakdown of what might have stopped unpaid community development workers surveyed from community activism or volunteering

4. 3. 4 Disability

All respondents were asked to indicate if they had any form of disability and, if so, its nature. The questionnaire included six categories of disability. These were: Health: Intellectual; Mental; Physical; Sensory; and 'Other'. All the paid community development workers stated they had no disabilities or ticked 'No'. Twenty per cent of unpaid community development workers said they had a physical disability. This result raises the question, why might more disabled people be unpaid community development workers? A separate method involving a verification workshop might answer this.

4. 4. Employment context

4. 4. 1. Paid community development worker respondents

The survey asked all paid community development workers to provide information about their employment. The questions covered:

- Employment sector,
- Work status – type of posts,
- Working conditions – contracts, tenure, hours worked and salary,
- Trade union membership.

Employing organization

The survey asked respondents to indicate from a list of organizations the kind that best described the body that employed them and to state their personal role within the organization. For analysis purposes organizations were categorised into various organization types and there was an 'other' category.

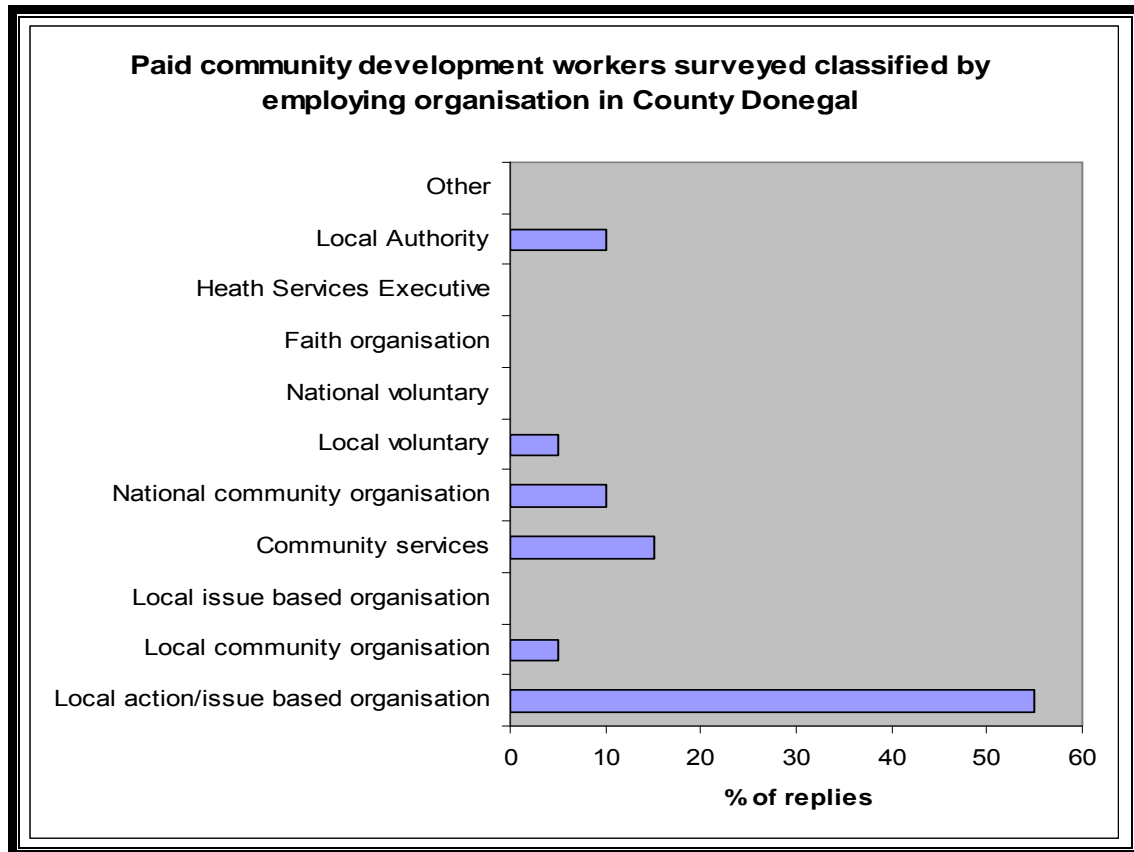
The majority (55 per cent) of paid community development workers were employed within a local action- or issue-based organization (see Graph 8). The survey re-classified local action- and issue-based organizations into the following:

- Community Development Programme (CDP),
- Drugs Task Force,
- Family Resource Centre Programme (FRCP),
- Integrated Cohesion Companies,
- Local Area Partnership,
- Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development (RAPID)
- Regeneration Company.

From Graph 9 below, it can be seen that more than half (54 per cent) of paid workers employed in local action or issue-based organizations in Donegal were engaged in the Community Development Programme (CDP). More than a third (36 per cent) of respondents employed in local action or issue-based organizations worked in a Partnership, and nine per cent in a Family Resource Centre Programme (FRCP). This profile brings to the fore that a

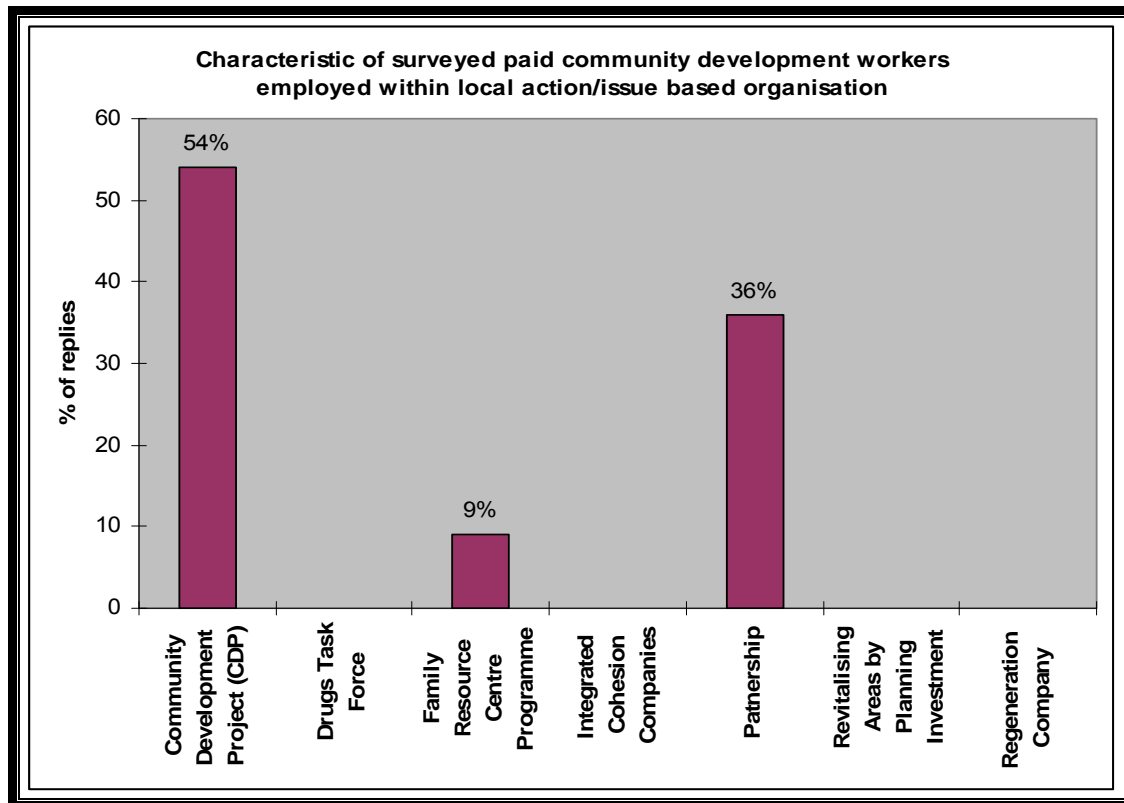
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number of paid community development workers in Donegal were engaged in cross-community projects and border partnerships.



Graph 8 Paid community development workers surveyed in Donegal classified by their employing organization.

The 'community services' category was the second largest employer, accounting for 15 per cent of employing organizations. 'National community organizations' employed 10 per cent of the paid community development workers surveyed. The 'Local Authority' provided fewer employment opportunities (10 per cent). Local community organizations also employed five per cent of paid community development workers (see Graph 9). Though relatively small, this figure is significant in that it indicates that, in Ireland, the community, voluntary and statutory sectors have been the site and vehicle for progressive policies in community development.



Graph 9 Characteristic of surveyed paid community development workers in County Donegal employed within local action/issue based organization

Job roles and Titles

Paid community development workers

The survey results indicate that paid community development workers undertake a wide range of roles in tackling local community development actions and specific community development issues. The data suggest that paid community development workers surveyed have wide responsibilities in co-ordinating projects that help to develop communities (15 per cent indicated their role was project co-ordinator and 10 per cent project manager). The survey results also indicate a focus on 'development' in job roles/titles and respondents indicated their personal role as follows:

- Community development co-ordinator: 10 per cent
- Community development officer 10 per cent
- Development Worker: 10 per cent
- Education and Development Officer 5 per cent.

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In some cases, a number of respondents indicated a role believed to fall outside community development titles. This role/title illustrated communities of interest and administrators who facilitate community development work or a community development approach or who inform and support community development work needs and practice. For instance, as shown in Table 6, five per cent of respondents reported themselves as an Alcohol Awareness Officer, 5 per cent as Youth Worker and another 5 per cent as a Family Visitor.

Only 10 per cent of paid community development workers surveyed reported having an administrative role, with 10 per cent describing themselves as Administrator, while five per cent indicated a managerial role and described themselves as Area Manager. The purpose of including these roles or job titles in this report is not to suggest or classify the role/title as being a community development job title but rather to consider the way in which individuals who see themselves as community development workers can best be described and represented in a national study.

Table 6 Paid community development workers surveyed personal role/job description

Type of post/ personal role				
	Male	Female	Total number of respondents	Valid Per cent
Administrator	0	2	2	10%
Alcohol Awareness Worker	0	1	1	5%
Area Manager	2	0	2	10%
Assisted Living Services Co-ordinator	0	1	1	5%
Community Development Co-ordinator	1	1	2	10%
Community Development Officer	1	1	2	10%
Development Worker	1	1	2	10%
Education & Community Development Officer	0	1	1	5%
Family Visitor	0	1	1	5%
Project Co-ordinator	0	3	3	15%
Project Manager	0	2	2	10%

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Youth Worker	0	1	1	5%
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Unpaid community development workers

For unpaid community development workers surveyed, data on job roles or titles related to their work role. The study identified a common distinction between unpaid community worker and community activist and community member through their specific community capacity building role. For instance, the data suggests that 45 per cent of unpaid workers surveyed were community activists and had served or were serving in an executive role in the organization in which they volunteered. Of these respondents, Secretary was the most common executive role at 45 per cent. The second highest category was Chairperson (35 per cent) with Treasurer at 20 per cent.

While ongoing training is essential in community work, the majority (90 per cent) of those that indicated they had served or were serving in an executive role had not received any training in this role.

Another 55 per cent of respondents stated they had not served or were not serving in an executive role. These respondents might represent unpaid workers who are accountable for community capacity building at a non-directive level such as unpaid community development worker or community member.

Because serving in an executive role and on a management committee varies so much, unpaid community development worker respondents were asked whether they had served or were serving on a management committee. The data suggested that one-third (33 per cent) of unpaid workers surveyed were community leaders who occupied decision-making positions in formal community organizations and had served or were serving on management committee in the organization in which they volunteered. Among these respondents, organization management was the most prevailing management committee role they had occupied (65 per cent). The second highest category (25 per cent) was in resource management while another significant proportion (10 per cent) had served or were serving on a staff management committee.

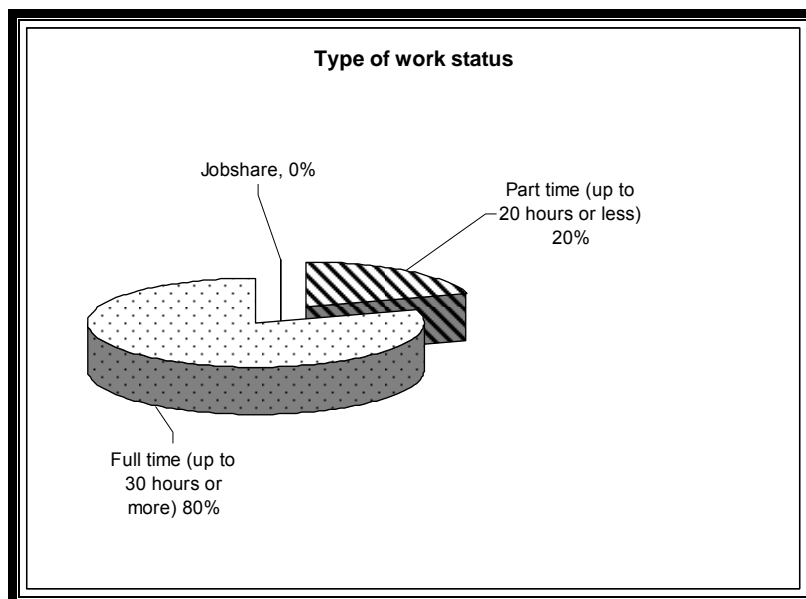
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It also emerged from the survey that a majority (90 per cent) of unpaid community workers who had served or were serving on a management committee had not received any training for this role.

The process of clarifying in this survey the distinction between unpaid community development worker and a community activist and community member is important. However, for a national survey the distinction should be tested with another method parallel to the questionnaire survey; such as a focus group where unpaid community development workers identified in this pilot study would be free to talk with other group members.

Work status

The survey obtained information about paid community development workers' work status. Most (80 per cent) of the paid workers were working full time while 20 per cent of the paid workers indicated they worked part time (see Graph 10).



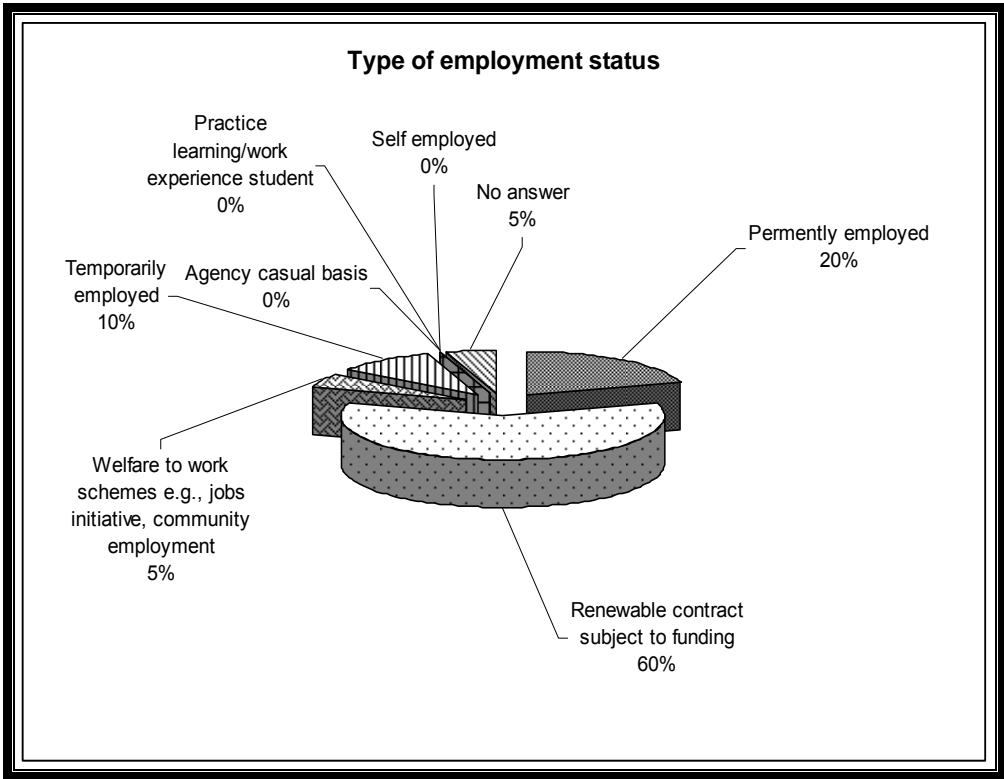
Graph 10 Type of work post status

However, when asked their status of employment, 60 per cent of respondents described their employment status as having a renewable contract subject to funding. Twenty per cent indicated they were permanently employed. However, when those who were in full-time employment were compared with those who were permanently employed, there was a consistent decline in the number of

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paid community development workers surveyed that were permanently employed. The survey showed that out of 80 per cent who were in full-time employment, only 25 per cent of them were permanently employed.

A further 10 per cent indicated that they were temporarily employed, while five per cent were in welfare-to-work schemes and five per cent did not answer the question (see graph 11). This finding suggests that there is considerable job insecurity for community development workers. Even in the statutory sector, 35 per cent of posts were renewable contracts subject to funding.



Graph 11 Type of work employment status

Working conditions

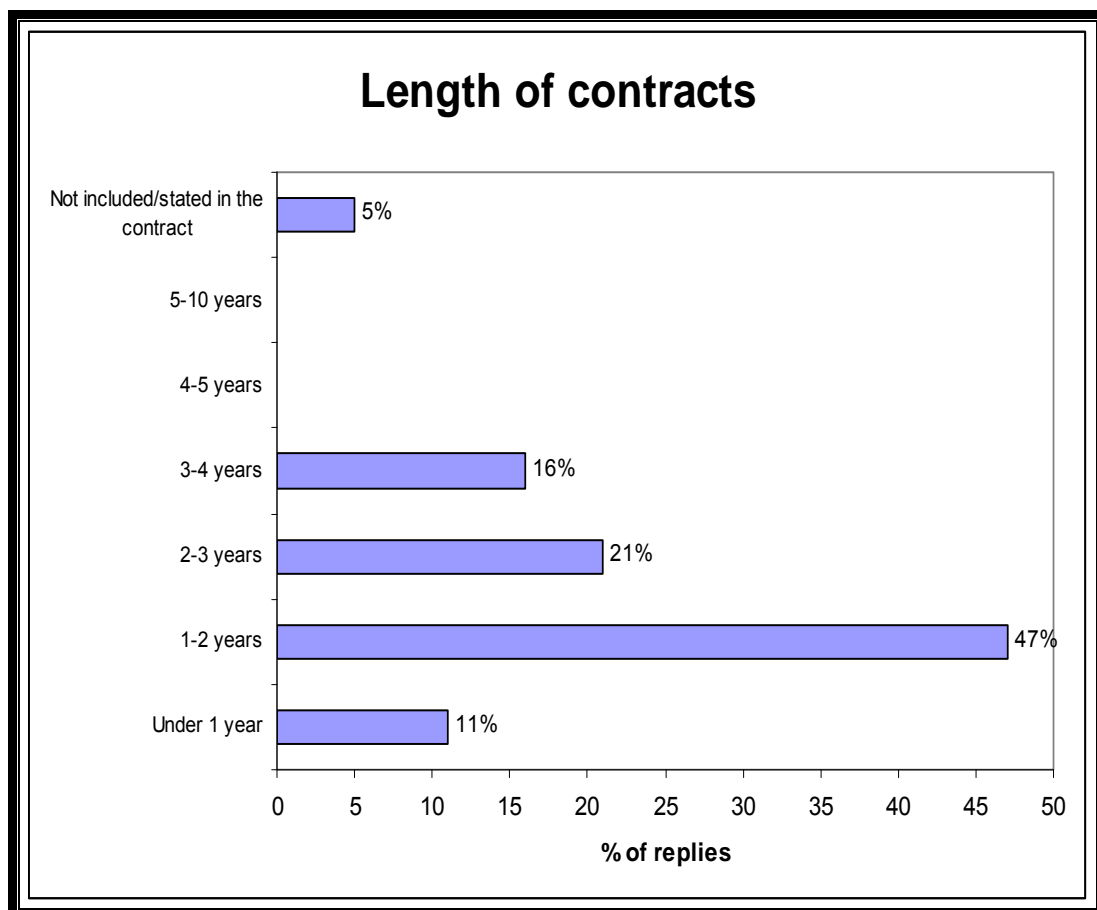
The survey obtained information about paid community development workers' contracts, tenure, salary, hours worked and terms of employment rights.

Contracts – tenure

When asked whether they had a contract of employment, 95 per cent of respondents stated yes. Of those that had a contract of employment, nearly half (47 per cent) had contracts of one year or less than two years (see Graph 11). A

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further 21 per cent had contracts of two to three years and 16 per cent had contracts between three and four years. Another 11 per cent had contracts of less than one year when they began their current post. Only five per cent stated that their contract period was not included or stated in their contract. It would seem reasonable to equate this to a 'permanent post' as this could be taken to mean a post without an end date. However, the five per cent who stated this were fewer than the 20 per cent who had described themselves as 'permanently employed'. It is possible that this difference could be explained by many posts starting as a renewable contract subject to funding. This might suggest that a smaller proportion of paid community development workers had permanent contracts.



Graph 12 Length of contracts

Salary

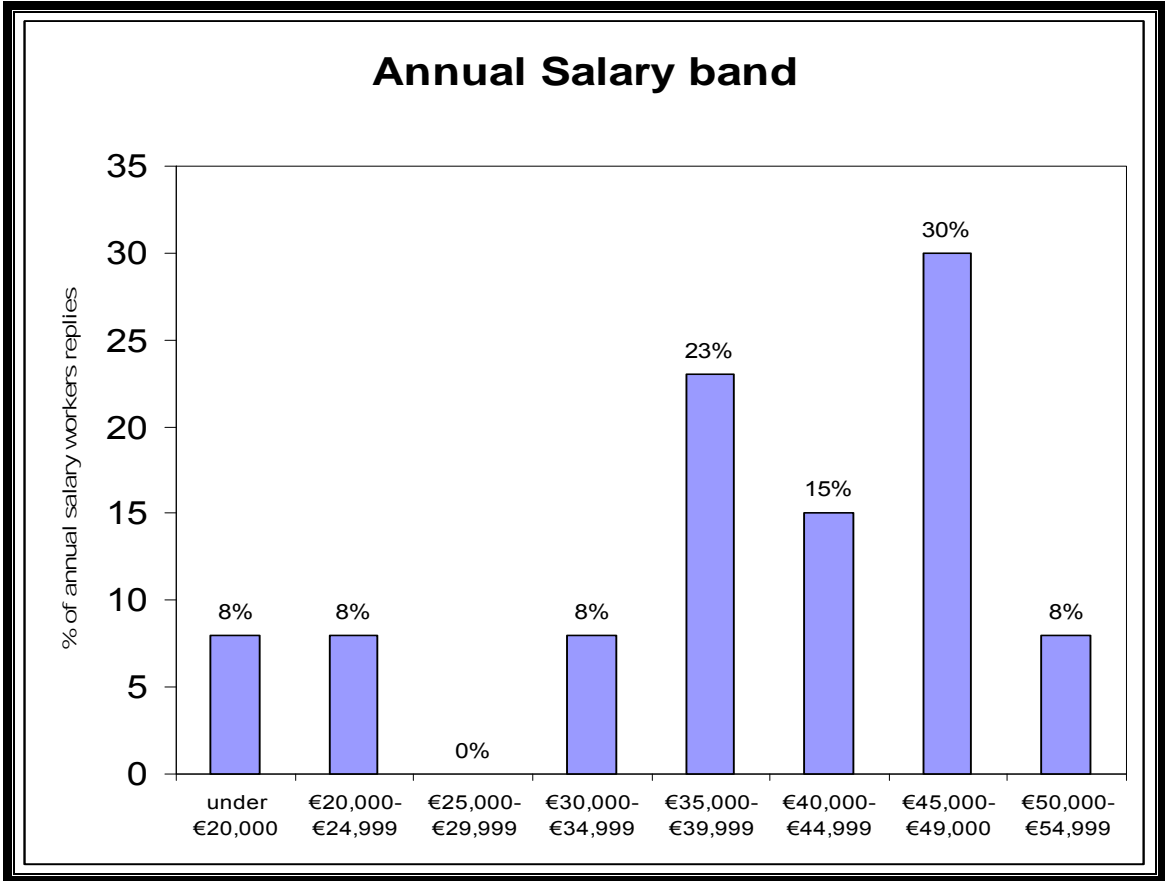
There may be a validity issue in relation to what people said they earned in their take-home pay or their basic salary due to different tax credits. However, the

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survey asked all respondents to indicate their gross pay annually, monthly, weekly or hourly, and at a daily rate. This provided evidence of their salary. Of the total respondents, 65 per cent gave their annual salary; five per cent monthly; another five per cent indicated they received a minimum wage rate of €8.65 per hour (as stipulated under the National Minimum Wage Act, 2000), while 25 per cent of all respondents did not tick any boxes.

The community development workers who received an annual salary appeared to be in full-time employment with only one working part time. Over 8 per cent of those who gave their annual salary were earning under €20,000 per year (see Graph12). A small number (8 per cent) also earned under €24,999 per year. With median salary for government and non-profit organizations in Donegal estimated at €48,000 per annum (see www.payscale.ie), a lot of community development work in Donegal is not highly paid.

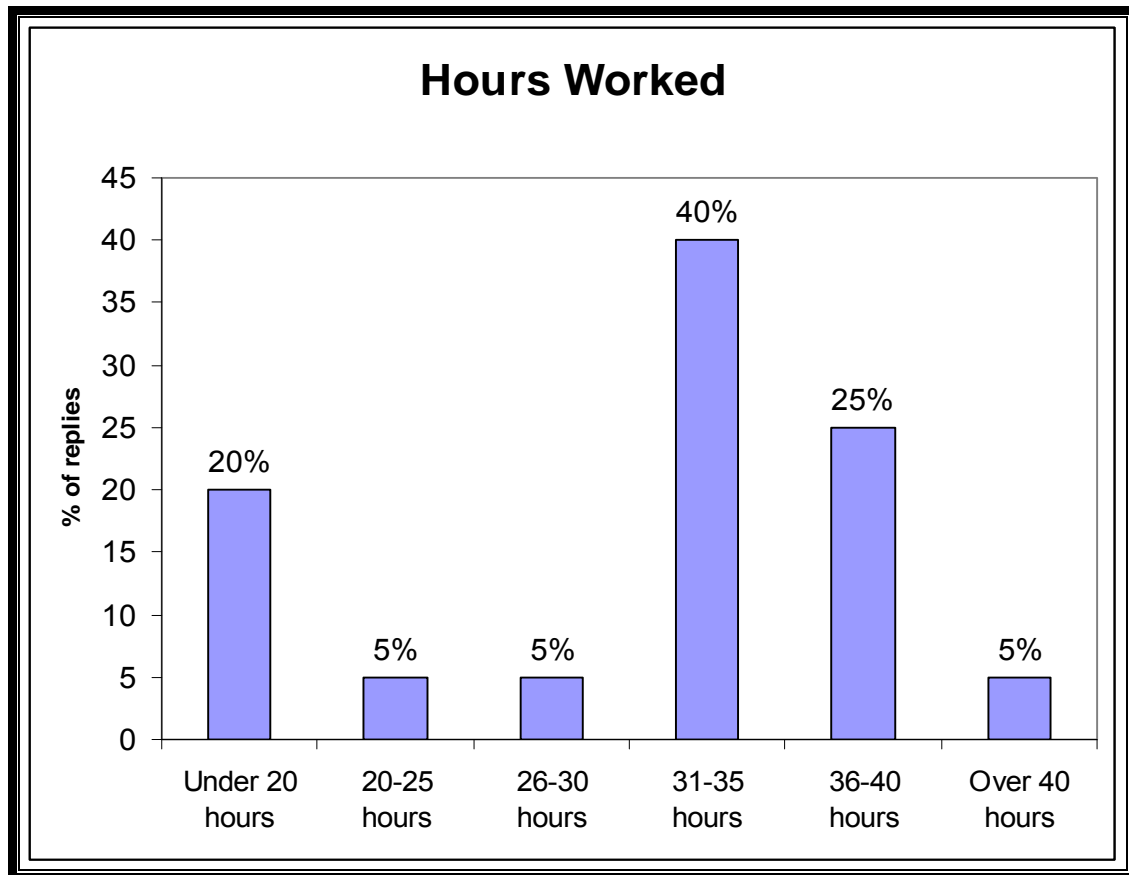
Wage prospects were considerably better for community development workers employed in the statutory sector in Donegal. A significant number (38 per cent) of survey respondents who received their salary annually earned more than the median salary for government and non-profit organizations in Donegal and most of these were working in the statutory sector. This also suggests that 62 per cent fall below the €48,000 median salary; therefore community development workers were not highly paid, creating another barrier to entry into community development work.



Graph 13 Annual Salary band

Working Hours

Given the large proportion (80 per cent) of posts that were full time it is no surprise that the majority (65 per cent) of community development workers in Donegal were paid to work between 31 and 40 hours per week (see Graph 14).



Graph 14 Hours worked

Working / managing extra hours worked

Forty per cent of all workers stated that they worked more hours than they were contracted to work. This was the case for more than 90 per cent of full-time workers. The average amount of unpaid working hours stated in the survey was eight hours per week. The survey also provided information about measures taken to manage or recompense working extra hours. Time back in lieu (90 per cent) was by far the most common strategy adopted to manage the extra hours worked. Financial recompense through overtime (five per cent) and in allowance (five per cent) was also identified.

Employment rights

When asked if their contract of employment referred to the terms of Irish employment rights, 55 per cent of respondents said they did, 20 per cent thought they didn't and the remaining 25 per cent did not know. The majority (70 per cent) of paid community development workers surveyed stated that they were not a member of a trade union. This could be a result of the increasing number

of paid community development workers surveyed who had a renewable contract subject to funding and were on short-term contracts. However, 30 per cent stated they were a member of a trade union.



Graph 15 Contract of employment in the context of referring to Irish employment rights

4. 4. 2 Unpaid community development worker respondents

The survey obtained information about unpaid community development workers' employment or work status outside their community activism role, and hours worked within the community or voluntary sector.

Employment status / work status outside community activism role

When asked to indicate if they worked outside their community activism role, 50 per cent of respondents stated 'Yes' and the remaining half stated 'No'. Table 7 summarises the work status of unpaid community development workers outside their community activism role.

Table 7 Work status

Work Status summary	%
Employed – Full time	13%
Employed – Part time	13%
Homemaker	24%
Not currently working/Unemployed	13%
Retired and not economically	13%

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active	
Retired but taking part-time job	0%
Self-employed	24%
Student	0%

While the proportions of unpaid community development workers reporting varying work status varied in the survey, these figures must be treated cautiously, for the number surveyed was typically small.

Hours worked

Next, the survey attempted to ascertain the proportion of working hours per week of unpaid community development workers. The average number of hours worked by unpaid workers was three and a half hours. This figure was raised by seven unpaid community development workers who indicated the number of hours they worked per week. One respondent did not indicate the number of hours worked.

4. 5 Experience

Respondents were asked to provide information about their background experience of community development work, both in a paid and unpaid capacity. They were also asked about their experience and the challenges they faced in their current role as a community development worker, in terms of the following:

- Administration,
- Funding of project,
- Staff issues,
- Resources,
- Government policies,
- EU policies,
- Job and career insecurity,
- Employment terms and conditions
- Levels of working time over a period of year.

Background experience

Over 60 per cent of paid community development workers who responded said that they were experienced as community development worker before they started in their current post. A majority (70 per cent) of paid workers surveyed acquired their experience from doing unpaid community development work before their current post. A large proportion of paid worker respondents (65 per cent) had community development experience in both a paid and unpaid capacity. Three-quarters (75 per cent) of paid workers surveyed had more than three years experience of community development work before they started their current post. However, a significant proportion, 45 per cent, had years of experience in the community development sector at local, regional and national levels.

Induction training experience

A significant proportion (60 per cent) of paid community development workers surveyed had induction training before they started in their current post. A further 40 per cent indicated they had not had training. The number of people who had had no induction training when they started their post suggested that understanding access to organizational resources, workers' rights and decision-making were issues for some paid community development workers surveyed, which might, in turn, limit their working effectiveness.

Motivational experience for unpaid community development workers

Understanding the underlying motivation that drives those who volunteer has been a recurring theme in much of the literature on volunteering (for example, Vineyard, 2001). What motivates a person to volunteer is a complex question that is difficult to answer, yet understanding these motivations can be of great assistance to organizations in attracting, placing and retaining volunteers. In order to provide an improved picture of volunteer motivation, unpaid community development workers surveyed were asked to identify from lists of items their initial motivation to become involved in community activism or volunteering. The unpaid workers who responded indicated a wide variety of initial motivations for volunteering, as can be seen from Table 8. Although small in scale, this section

of the study did make a further contribution to the research on why people volunteer.

Table 8 Percentage of response and rank order of importance for survey items

Scale	Survey item	% of responses
Personal		
	My practical interest in the area in which I am volunteering (e.g., normal life events, health)	75%
	My strong belief in the values of community and social justice	63%
	The importance of working with other community members	50%
	Experiencing social injustices and poor local conditions	38%
	To learn more about myself	25%
Social		
	Being active and maintaining physical and mental health through involvement	75%
	To become a part of a new community when I moved into this neighbourhood	50%
	To contribute or give something back	25%
	To learn more about myself and other people	0%
Political		
	To pull the community together	75%
	For combating social exclusion	38%
	Identifying issues in my community and promoting involvement in governance through lobbying	12%
	It is a fight or struggle for a healthy community	12%
	To build community confidence	12%
Moral Values		
	To bring about social change in my community	75%
	It is part of my religious belief	0%
	Volunteerism runs in my family	0%

Issues of concern for unpaid community development workers were rated as important in terms of the context (i.e. structure of community groups or organizations, rights of unpaid workers) and need for support (i.e. team work, network support). This is illustrated in Table 9 below.

Table 9 Issues of concern for unpaid CDWs surveyed

Scale	Survey item	% of responses
Structure of community organization work	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that this organization/group was well organized.	25%
	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that this organization/group was not organized (i.e. it did not have a policy statement on involvement of unpaid workers, did not provide information on the organization structure, did not have resources for training, did not provide childcare expense etc.).	75%
Rights of unpaid worker	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that the staff in this organization were very caring (i.e. treating unpaid workers with utmost respect).	88%
	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that the staff in this organization were uncaring towards the unpaid worker.	12%
Team Work	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that the organization managed to make me and other unpaid workers feel we were a part of it.	75%
	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that the organization did not make myself and other unpaid worker part of the team.	25%
Network Support	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that there was a support network for all the unpaid community workers.	12%
	When I started out as an unpaid community development worker I found out that there was no support network for the unpaid community worker.	88%

Structure of Organization

Concerning the structure of the organization, a majority (75 per cent) of unpaid community development workers surveyed indicated that community organization was not well structured when they started out. This might mean that many unpaid community development workers surveyed could not find information about the community organization when they started. However, it is

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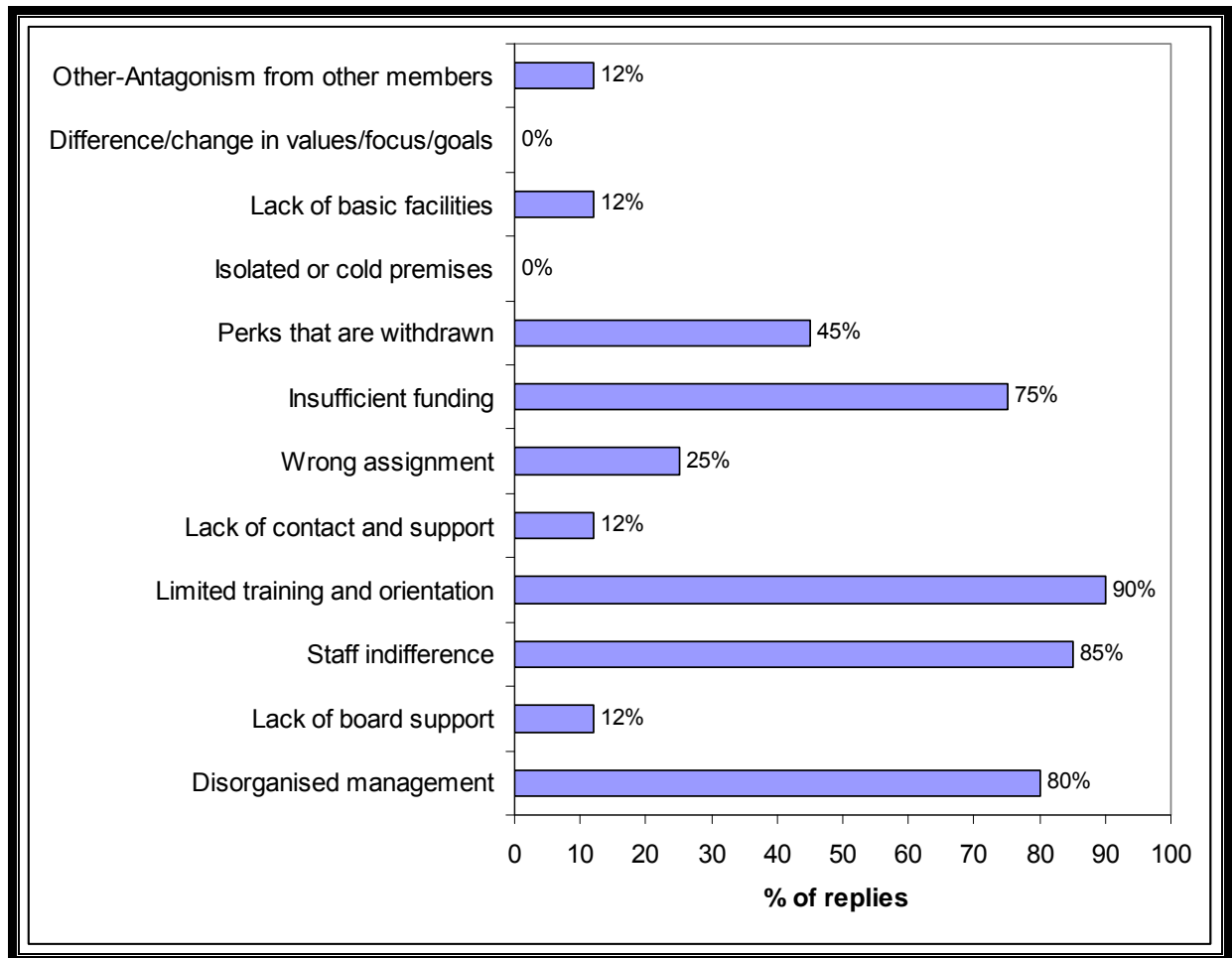
too difficult to know. Verification workshops might provide some useful pointers about this.

Rights of unpaid worker

The rights of unpaid workers were by far respected. A majority (88 per cent) indicated they had experienced staff who cared when they started out in the organization in which they were volunteering. Community development practices such as team work worked well for the majority (75 per cent) of unpaid community development workers who responded. However, the findings revealed that there was no network support provided for unpaid community development workers when they started out; this concern was identified by 88 per cent of unpaid community development workers who responded.

This part of the survey was supported by a question that asked unpaid community development workers what had displeased them in their volunteering career since they had started and to indicate the factors that might have displeased them. According to 16 per cent nothing had displeased them in their unpaid community development work. Of those who said they had been displeased (84 per cent), a very large majority, 90 per cent, stated limited training and orientation as factors. Other factors that displeased were staff indifference (85 per cent); antagonism from other members (12 per cent) and disorganised management, which was identified by a majority (80 per cent).

These findings were backed up by negative comments made by several unpaid worker respondents about the funding of projects and 75 per cent cited insufficient funding as a turn-off; 12 per cent cited lack of basic facilities and 45 per cent identified perks that are withdrawn. A significant proportion (12 per cent) also mentioned lack of board support as a turn-off (see graph 14).



Graph 16: Percentage of turn-offs for unpaid community development workers surveyed.

4. 6 Education and training

The survey also obtained information about the educational and professional qualifications of paid and unpaid community development workers; the requirements for the post; training in post; training programmes and barriers to training.

4. 6. 1 Educational Qualification

A majority (70 per cent) of paid community development workers surveyed held a primary degree or higher level qualification. As noted in Table 10, 45 per cent held a primary degree qualification. A further 25 per cent held postgraduate degree qualifications. Comparison of the degree qualifications held by respondents showed a diverse range of academic disciplines. There was

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evidence in the findings that over one-third (34 per cent) of all the respondents who held a primary degree had their qualification within a community development discipline such as Community Development or Community Studies). There is substantial evidence to suggest that community development employers in Donegal are not explicitly seeking individuals with specific community development professional qualifications. This is substantiated by the fact that the majority of respondents (66 per cent) held their degree in disciplines such as Business Studies (11 per cent), Social Work (11 per cent), Nursing (11 per cent), Sociology (11 per cent), Psychology (11 per cent) and Science (11 per cent). This raises the issue of the recognition and value accorded to community development professional qualifications by employers.

A small number of paid community development workers surveyed held a diploma (15 per cent), university certificate (five per cent) or FETAC certificate (five per cent) while a further five per cent held the Leaving Certificate.

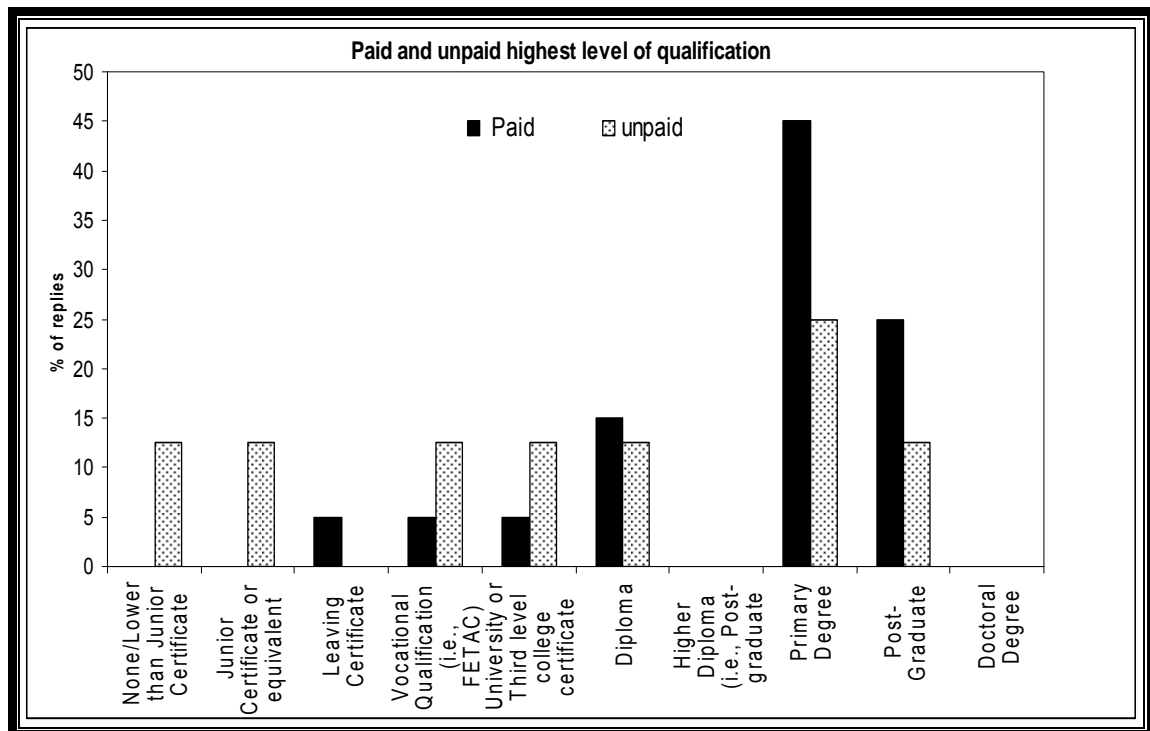
Table 10 Paid CDW respondents’ highest level of education

Q22 What is your highest level of education	% of all respondents
None/Lower than Junior Certificate	0
Junior Certificate or equivalent	0
Leaving Certificate	5
Vocational Qualification (i.e. FETAC)	5
University or third-level college certificate	5
Diploma	15
Higher Diploma (i.e. postgraduate diploma)	0
Primary Degree	45
Postgraduate	25
Doctoral Degree	0

The unpaid community development workers in the survey also held a variety of educational qualifications. There was little variation in educational qualification between unpaid and paid community development workers (see Graph 15). Unpaid community development workers in the survey tended to have lower qualifications compared with paid workers surveyed. More than a third (37.5 per

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cent) of unpaid community development workers surveyed had attained first degree and postgraduate qualifications.



Graph 17 Surveyed paid and unpaid community development workers level of education

Paid community development worker respondents were asked to list the accredited and non-accredited qualifications they held in community development. The types of accredited qualification identified are listed below in Table 11.

Table 11 Respondents' accredited and non-accredited qualifications in community development

Identified accredited qualification in community development	Identified non-accredited qualification in community development
Diploma in Community Leadership	People management
Certificate in Community Drama	Social Assist
Certificate in Human Resource Development	Examining a conflict with a focus in Northern Ireland
Professional Development within the Community	Negotiation Skills

Certificate in Conflict resolution and Mediation	Investing in Children
Diploma in Child Protection	Staff supervision
B.A Community Development	Work life balance
B.A Community Studies	
Diploma in Leadership Management	
Diploma in Community Facilitation Skills	
FETAC Certificate in Community Special Needs	

It is obvious from these responses that studies of community development in the Border region have generally focused on areas of activity. For instance, some of these accredited and non-accredited qualifications applied to the border region and its distinct circumstances.

4. 6. 2 Requirement for the post

A large number (85 per cent) of all respondents stated that they were not required to have accredited qualifications in community development. According to respondents employers do not often require a qualification in community development for employment. Employers seem to seek other, equivalent qualifications or experience. However, this needs to be verified through workshops, as a large number (60 per cent) of respondents held accredited qualifications in community development before they started in their post.

4. 6. 3 Training in post

Both paid and unpaid community development workers were asked whether there was a training programme for community development workers in their organization, and whether they had completed any training course relevant to their post. They were also asked to indicate the type of training they had completed and to identify any factors that might have prevented them from taking up training opportunities. Paid and unpaid respondents were also asked whether they had opportunities to attend seminars, conferences, committee meetings or network meetings on community development, and to indicate how often they attended these, giving their response on a weekly basis.

Training programme

When paid community development workers were asked if there was a training programme for community development workers in their organization, 90 per cent stated 'Yes'. On the other hand, 62 per cent of unpaid workers surveyed stated that there was 'No' training programme for unpaid community development workers in their organization. A further 38 per cent stated that their organizations did have a training programme for unpaid community development workers. This raises the question of whether this awareness influences individual community development workers to take up community development training when available in their organization.

It is interesting to note that for paid community development workers surveyed who had a community development role or job title (75 per cent), only 40 per cent of respondents said that they had completed a community development training course relevant to their role during their current post. Among paid workers who had administration and community of interest roles or job titles who were surveyed (25 per cent), five per cent stated that they had completed a community development training course relevant to their role during their current post. Most (85 per cent) of these respondents were employed in local authorities and the Health Service Executive (statutory sector) and had completed training within one year of employment.

Of a further 55 per cent who stated they had not completed community development training while in their posts, 50 per cent were paid community development workers with a community development role or job title and five per cent were community development workers with administration and community of interest roles. Hence, if paid community development workers are to be truly represented in a national survey, roles and job titles that have community development in them have to be balanced with other community development work roles or job titles that don't express community development and that appear ineligible to be included. This suggests why the self-identification method used in this study might be useful for building a representative sample of community development workers. Nonetheless, it is important to report barriers

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when there is evidence of such strong commitment in wanting to take up training.

For unpaid workers surveyed, a majority (90 per cent) said that they had completed community development training course(s) relevant to their responsibilities. When they were asked to indicate the type of community development training they had received, a majority (95 per cent) of unpaid workers surveyed indicated they had completed community-based training. To ascertain the level of training, they were also asked to identify from a list the subject matter and rate the amount of training they had received (see Table 12).

Table 12 Level of training received by unpaid community development workers surveyed

Description	% level of training received by unpaid community development workers surveyed			
	Rarely	Very Little	Some	A lot
Lists of training				
Principles and process of community work	12.5%	0%	62.5%	0%
Governance and management	12.5%	12.5%	50%	0%
Group theory, purpose and process	12.5%	12.5%	50%	0%
Social policies (i.e., with focus on poverty and social inclusion, equality and integration)	12.5%	12.5%	50%	0%
Policy development	12.5%	0%	75%	0%
Facilitating and supporting self-help	25%	0%	50%	12.5%
Networking	37.5%	0%	50%	0%
Supervise other community activists	50%	0%	37.5%	0%
Research and evaluation	37.5%	12.5%	37.5%	0%
Personal development	25%	25%	37.5%	0%

Over 87 per cent of unpaid community development workers surveyed responded to the question. Of these, 12.5 per cent had rarely received training on principles and process of community work; governance and management; group theory; purpose and process; social policies and policy development. The majority of these respondents were community activists. Another 17.5 per cent

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indicated that they had received the 'Very 'little' level of training from the list of training levels. Of the unpaid community development workers surveyed, 62.5 per cent stated they had some level of training on principles and process of community work. These respondents were mostly community members and unpaid community development workers. This suggested that nearly two-thirds of the unpaid community development workers surveyed had a significant knowledge of the principles and process of community work.

However, it is also apparent from Table 12 that 50 per cent of the unpaid community development worker respondents had received 'Some' level of training on governance and management; group theory; purpose and process; and social policies. It is interesting that over three-quarters (75 per cent) of the unpaid community development workers surveyed had received 'Some' level of training on policy development and these were mostly community leaders.

Although one-quarter of the respondents (25 per cent) indicated that they had rarely received training in facilitating and supporting self-help, one-eighth (12.5 per cent) indicated they had received a lot of training on it, while another half (50 per cent) stated they had received some level of training on this.

As the findings highlight, the training of unpaid community development workers in Donegal was characterised by three key issues:

- A good deal (50 per cent) of unpaid community development workers in the survey had received 'some' level of training on networking.
- A significant percentage (37.5%) of unpaid workers in the survey had received 'some' level of training on how to supervise other community activists, on research and evaluation, and on personal development;
- A good deal of unpaid community development workers in the survey 'rarely' received training on networking (37.5 per cent); on supervising other community activists (50 per cent), on research and evaluation (37.5 per cent) and on personal development (25 per cent).

Attending network meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences on community development work

If professionally robust and effective community work practice is to be ensured in a changing Ireland, it is vital that community development workers are allowed by their organization to attend relevant seminars, workshops, conferences and network meetings on community development. When we asked all respondents if they had opportunities to attend seminars, conferences and network meetings on community development, 95 per cent of paid workers surveyed stated ‘Yes’, with a further five per cent stating ‘No’. The finding for unpaid workers surveyed was similar: 88 per cent of unpaid workers surveyed stated ‘Yes’ and 12 per cent stated ‘No’. This meant that a lot of community development workers in our survey would be able to keep up to date with and reflect on community development practice.

When respondents were asked to indicate how often they attended seminars and conferences related to community development work on a weekly basis. Just 10 per cent of paid workers indicated they had ‘rarely’ been able to attend relevant seminars, conferences and so on on a weekly basis while 29 per cent of unpaid workers in the survey indicated they ‘rarely’ attended seminars and conferences on a weekly basis. This meant that the majority (80 per cent) of paid worker respondents and 42 per cent of unpaid workers had been able to attend seminars and conferences related to community development work several times on a weekly basis, while 10 per cent of paid workers had been able to attend such work-related meetings ‘a lot’ on a weekly basis. The figure for unpaid workers who attended a lot of seminar and conferences related to community work on a weekly basis was 29 per cent (see Table 13).

Table 13 Responses level for attending seminars and conference related to community development work

Description of how often respondents attend seminars, conferences related to community development work on a weekly basis		
Description	% of paid CDWs responses	% of Unpaid CDWs responses
Rarely	10	29
Very little	0	0

Some	80	42
A lot	10	29

Respondents were asked about their attendance at network meetings and committee meetings related to community development work on a weekly basis. Just five per cent of paid respondents identified that they had ‘rarely’ been able to attend such meetings while 65 per cent of paid workers indicated they had been able to attend these meetings several times on a weekly basis and 30 per cent of respondents indicated that they had been able to attend relevant meetings ‘a lot’ on a weekly basis (see Table 14).

Table 14 Level of attending network meetings and committee meetings related to community development work

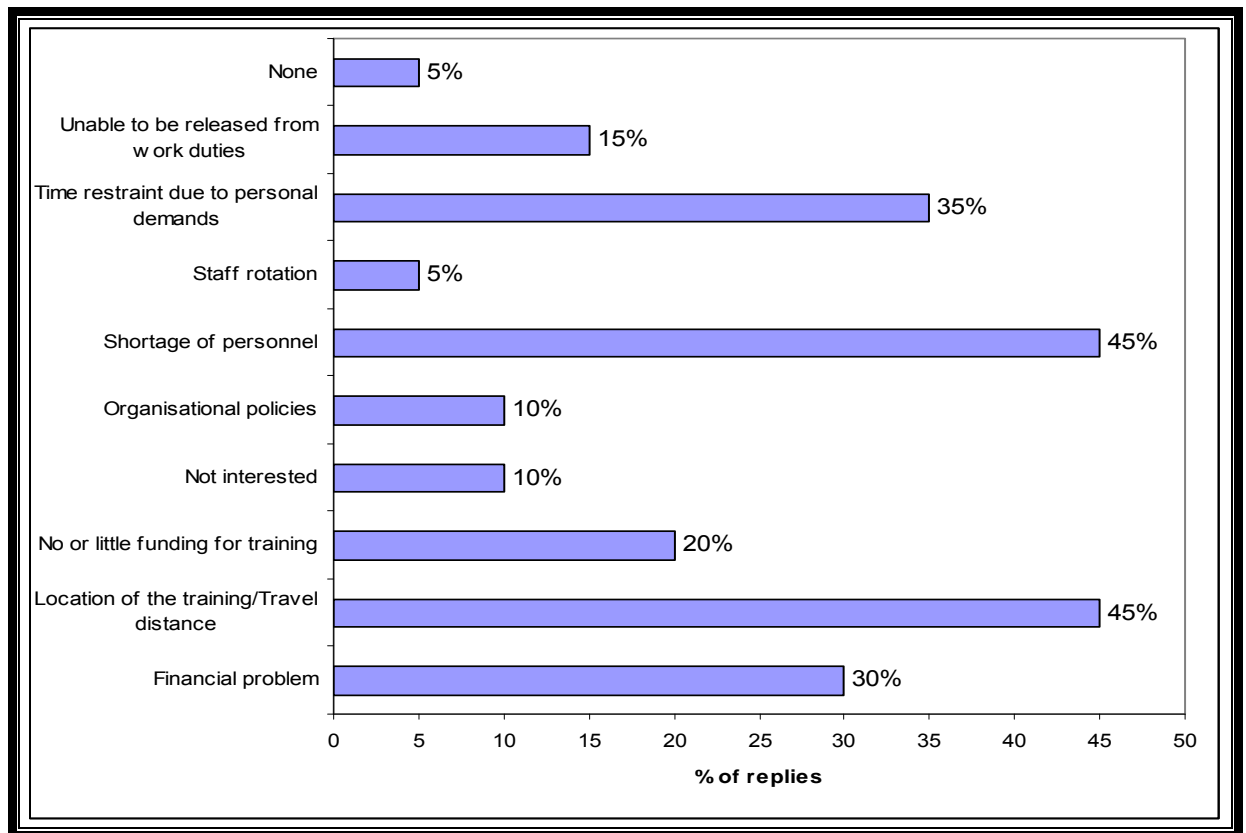
Description of how often the respondents attend network meetings, committee meetings related to community development work on a weekly basis	
Description	% of paid CDWs responses
Rarely	5%
Very little	0%
Some	65%
A lot	30%

Barriers to training

Respondents were asked ‘what, if anything, might prevent you from taking up training?’ and were asked to tick all boxes that applied. Shortage of personnel (indicated by 45 per cent of respondents) and location of the training or travel distance (indicated by 45 per cent of respondents) were the most commonly key factors identified as barriers to training by paid community development workers. Other significant factors identified were time restraint due to personal demands (35 per cent); financial problem (30 per cent); little or no funding for training (20 per cent); organizational policies (10 per cent); and staff rotation (five per cent). Only a very small proportion (10 per cent) in the survey stated that they were not interested, as a personal choice, in taking up training. This indicates a strong commitment on the part of paid community development workers in Donegal to continuous professional development within the community development occupation. This was also reflected in a low number of paid community

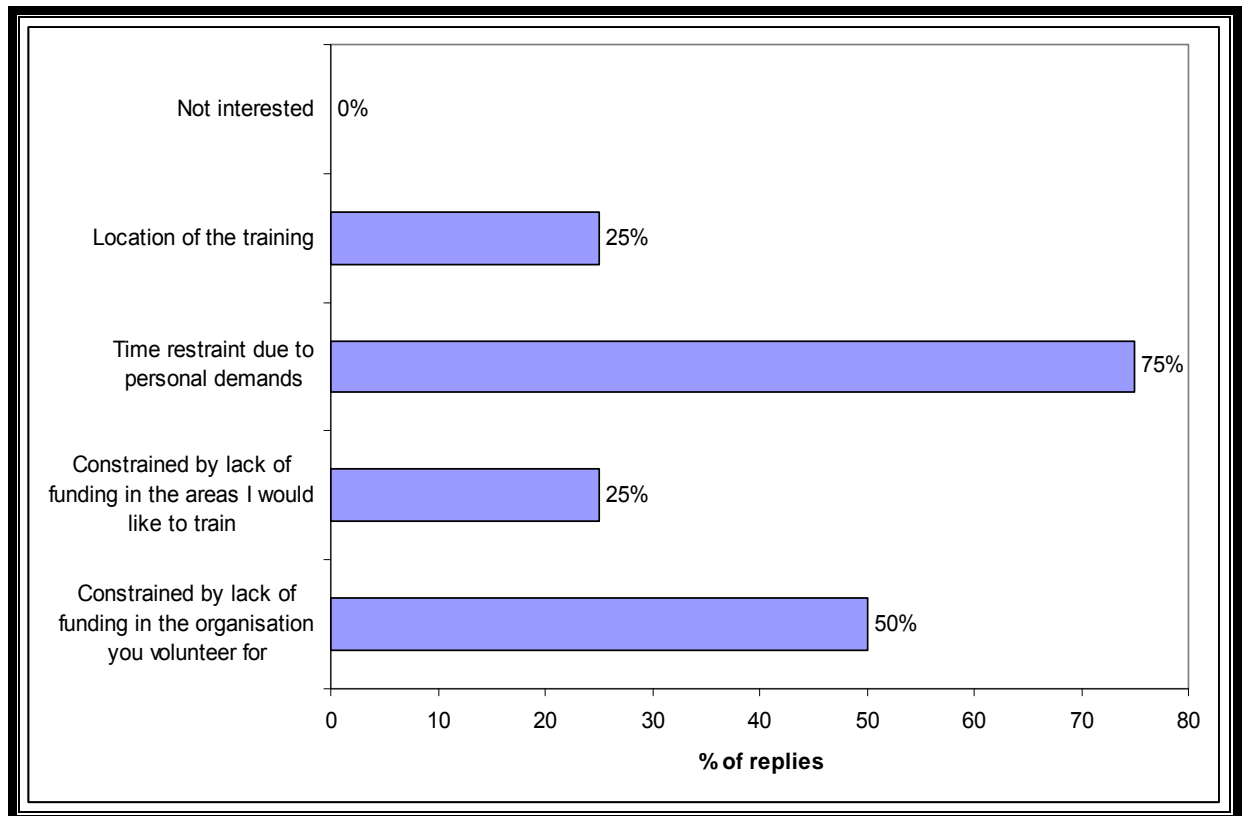
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development worker respondents who indicated 'none', as personal choice (see Graph 16).



Graph 18 Barriers to training – paid workers surveyed

Over 75 per cent of unpaid community development workers who answered this question cited time restraints due to personal demands as a possible barrier to taking training (see Graph 17). Another 75 per cent of unpaid respondents indicated 'constrained by funding' as a barrier to training, with half (50 per cent) of unpaid respondents indicating lack of funding in the organization in which they volunteered and a quarter (25 per cent) indicating lack of funding in the areas in which they would like to train. Another significant proportion of respondents (25 per cent) indicated 'location of the training' as barrier.



Graph 19 Barriers to training – unpaid workers surveyed

When unpaid community development worker respondents were asked to indicate if they would consider making the transition to paid community development work by ticking Yes or No, 63 per cent ticked 'Yes', indicating they would love to consider making the transition to paid community development work. A large proportion of those who stated No (37 per cent) fell into the age range 60 to 69 years and over-70 age ranges.

4. 7 Challenges faced in current roles

This survey examined key issues that faced community development workers in their role under the headings of:

- Administration,
- Funding of project,
- Organizational decision-making
- Staff issues,
- Government policies,
- EU policies,

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- Job and career insecurity,
- Employment terms and conditions
- Levels of working time over a period of year.

The idea was to better understand the challenges faced by the community development worker generally and, more important, to complement this study, which had a largely quantitative basis, with some information of a qualitative nature. The fact that 81 per cent of respondents (paid and unpaid workers) answered this question was important and reassured us that points such as these could be further examined or findings reinforced if focus groups were built into future methodology for a national survey.

Administration

For paid community development workers, administration pressures were seen as undermining their role as a community development worker. The burden of paperwork was cited by 85 per cent of respondents, 15 per cent said they were overburdened with administration and bureaucracy. Examples of respondents' statements included the following below:

'Too much emphasis on paperwork in general, outputs appear to be more important than outcomes or impact in the long run.'

(Female respondent, 40–49 age category)

'Load of paperwork to be completed in order to satisfy monitoring and evaluation report.'

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

'The level of demand from administration is never ending and often overburdened with bureaucracy and unreasonable demands for reporting.'

(Female respondent, 50–59 age category)

Unpaid community development worker respondents saw administration as shared tasks to improving community development work. The following quote illustrates this:

‘Shared by others in management and key staff. Although I do very little admin, a lot of volunteers good at saying what should be done . . . however, there is great expectations put on them.’

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

Funding of projects

A majority (85 per cent) of paid community development workers surveyed made negative comments about the funding of projects:

‘Short-term nature of the post does not lend itself to long-term development, nobody overseeing good projects that could be mainstreamed.’

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

Some of the comments made about funding of projects included the notion that many community development organizations were highly focused on funding applications. Accordingly, it was stated that:

‘Short cycle of funding means that we have to be continually working on funding applications.’

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

‘Funding is always an issue. We fall outside RAPID, so are primarily focused on Peace Programme funding which is quite specific in its aims and targets. Difficult to get funding that allows independence and focuses on community work.’

(Female respondents, 40–49 age category)

In spite of negative comments made about funding projects, some respondents (15 per cent) were pleased with the funding of projects:

‘Funding within the Family Resource Centre programme is core funded and quite straightforward.’

(Female respondent, 40–49 age category)

Comments and insights relating to best practice in funding of projects were also made:

'Often it seems that money is thrown at organizations for a time period, but once that funding is done, no one seems to ask the question as to how successful that work was and whether it should be mainstreamed. There doesn't seem to be any thinking about best practice and how to continue this work. It sometimes seems like a waste of resources in the long run if good is allowed to die.'

(Female respondent, 40–49 age category)

For unpaid community development worker respondents, the majority (90 per cent) saw funding of projects as an issue. It was stated by one of the respondents as:

'Never enough – projects often end just when progress is being made. Sustainability is a big issue.'

(Female respondent, 50–59 age category)

Organizational decision-making

Positive comments were made about organizational decision-making, for example, 85 per cent of the paid worker respondents praised the notion of good decision-making. According to one respondent: 'We have been very lucky with the calibre of our management committee, whose membership is drawn from a pool of committed community development workers'. A further 15 per cent stated that it depended on the knowledge and experience of the management committee.

For unpaid community development worker respondents, organizational decision-making was an issue: 75 per cent of respondents stated management conflict and 25 per cent commented on the difficulty of getting a quorum for meetings:

'Sometimes conflict can arise but decisions are made well with correct information and fact.'

(Female respondent, 40–49 age category)

'Sometimes [*it is*] difficult to get a quorum for meetings. The same people involved in too many organizations, therefore badly stretched people reluctant to take executive roles.'

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

Staff issues

Given the large proportion of paid community development worker posts that were on renewable contracts, it was not surprising that all the comments made on staff issues were negative. For example, it was stated that:

'Not enough paid staff in the sector in general.'

(Male respondent, 40–49 age category)

'Lack of full-time staff and too much reliance on volunteers.'

(Female respondent, 30–39 age categories)

Government policies

The survey elicited some useful comments about government policies and the challenges faced by paid community development workers in their role. State control of community organizations through funding featured significantly (80 per cent). Other comments concerned state interest (15 per cent) and change in state focus (five per cent). This particular individual response expressed all the highlighted comments:

'It appears that the State is only interested in social inclusion when Europe forces it into thinking about it. It seems there has been a change in focus over the past few years and the resultant change can be seen on the ground here. They also appear to want to control organizations funded by the State, which is the opposite to [of] what community development is meant to be about.'

(Female respondent, 40–49 age category)

EU policies

A majority (81 per cent) of paid worker respondents stated that EU policies were well adapted to many of the challenges for community development in Ireland but 19 per cent further criticised government policies as regards the community development sector. One respondent stated that:

'The EU has probably been the spark that ignited the funding trail for community development in Ireland but regrettably the Irish Government appears to have grabbed the opportunity not just to secure the money but to replace it with its own commitment to the sector.'

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

Insecurity of careers

Lack of career security was an issue for all the paid community development workers surveyed. Even those who were well qualified to work in the community development sector highlighted the continuous dilemma they faced with short-term contracts that, in turn, affected individual morale among paid community development workers and the community development work profession in general. This was stated by one of the respondent@

'I have lived with the insecurity for many years now and have accepted it on a level but at the end of funding periods is always challenging, community workers still need to pay mortgages and eat like the rest of society.'

(Female respondent, 40–49 age category)

Terms and condition of employment

Given the positive comments made by the paid community development worker respondents about organizational decision-making, the majority of paid workers surveyed did not recognize terms and condition of employment as a problem but stated that 'it is varied' (55 per cent) and 'could be better' (45 per cent). This was stated by one of the respondents:

‘Again this is wholly dependent on the leadership and management of the specific organization. It is so varied across the board.’

(Female respondent, 60–69 age category)

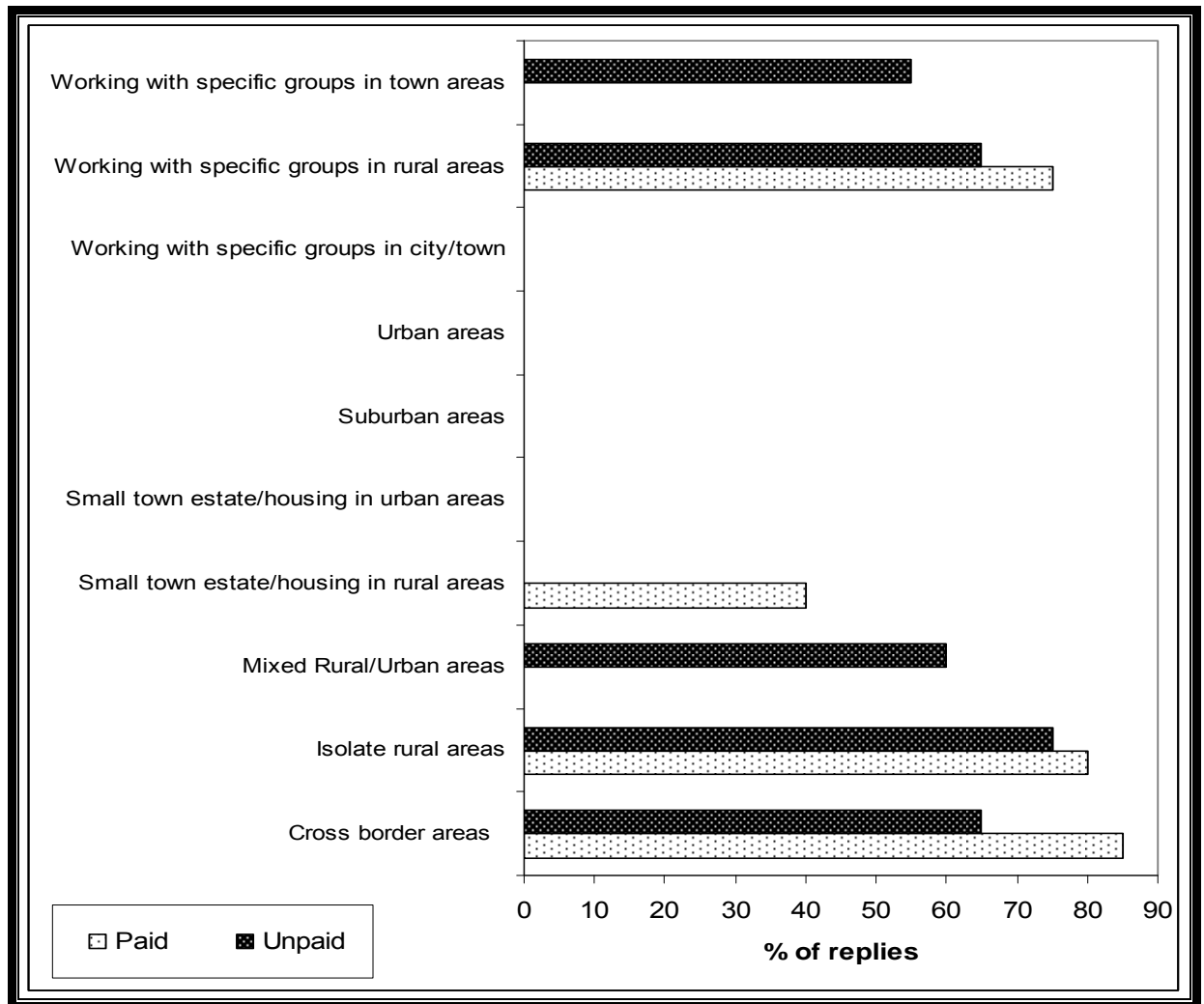
However, all the unpaid community development workers surveyed stated that terms and conditions were an issue for them. It was stated by one unpaid worker who responded that terms and conditions were ‘usually not very clear for volunteers’. Another unpaid worker respondent stated: ‘Very often these are not clearly defined and even if they are they tend to get ignored eventually.’

4. 8 Work settings and responsibilities

The survey obtained information about paid and unpaid workers’ work settings, level of working time responsibilities and working method.

4. 8.1 Work settings

The context of the work settings identified in the survey was within rural community development work (for both unpaid and paid work). Although 40 per cent of paid workers indicated they worked within small town estates and housing in rural areas, another 75 per cent of paid workers surveyed indicated they worked with specific groups in rural areas. It appeared from these findings that many (60 per cent) unpaid worker respondents worked in mixed rural/urban areas. This finding supported the significant proportion (65 per cent) of paid community development workers who indicated that they worked with specific groups in rural areas and with specific groups in town areas (55 per cent) (see Graph 18).



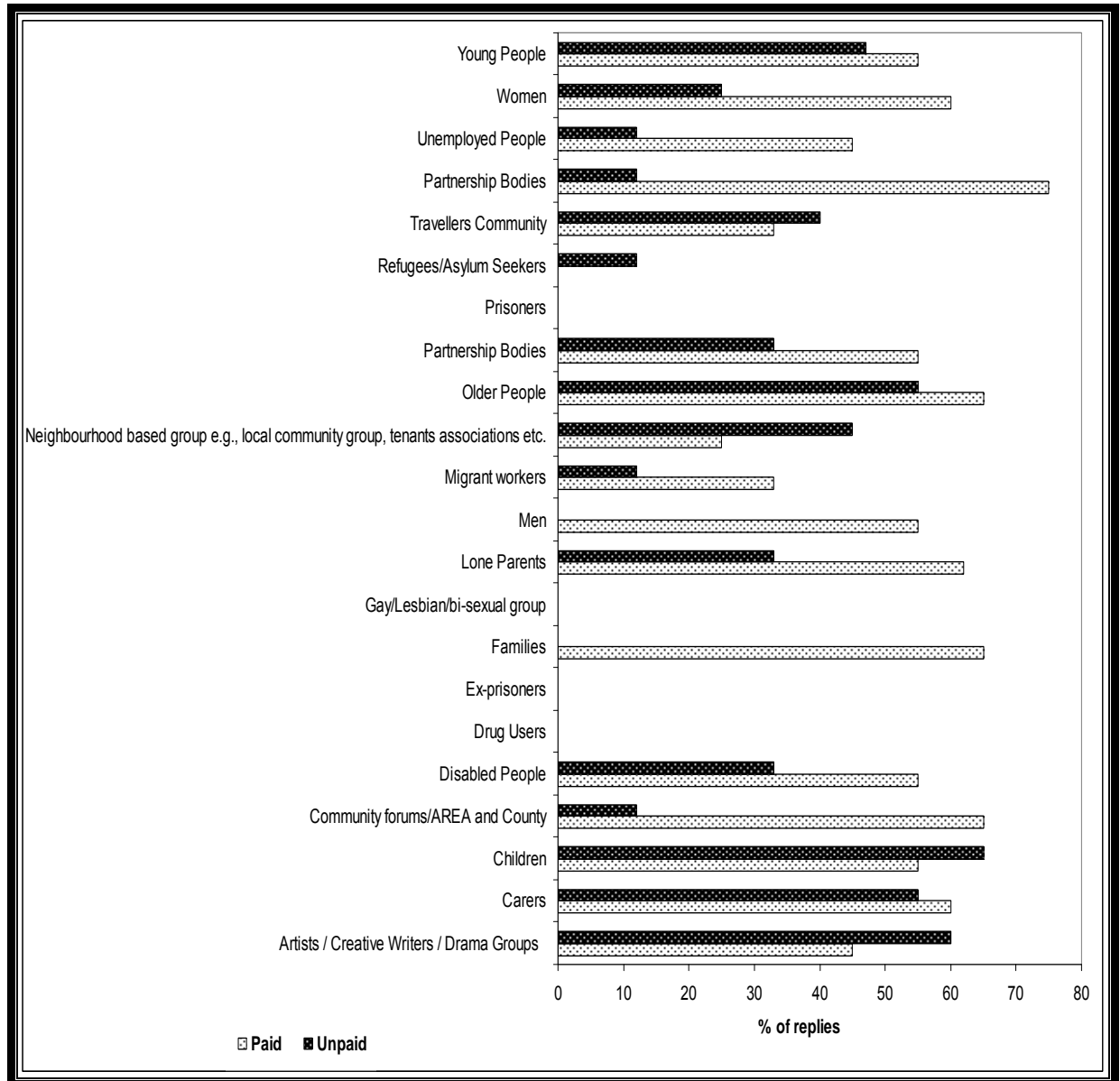
Graph 20 Working environments of community development workers surveyed

The majority of paid community development workers surveyed (82 per cent) indicated they acted as a link with the community. This showed that such workers acted as facilitators to promote self-help in the community. A good deal (52 per cent) of the work setting indicated was policy work, which meant that paid community development workers surveyed had a remit of developing new community-based programmes and resources in Donegal.

In the survey, respondents were asked about their working environments and the group(s) they worked with. The working environment that featured significantly (85 per cent for paid workers and 65 per cent for unpaid workers) was cross-border areas. This is not surprising as the pilot area (Donegal) lies closest to the border. Studies of community development in the border region have generally focused on areas of activity (Harvey, 2008). This is particularly

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true given that the findings showed that community work in the survey area was specific and 80 per cent of paid community work activities took place in isolated areas and 75 per cent of unpaid workers activities took place in isolated areas.



Graph 21 Percentage of specific groups that community development workers surveyed worked with

It appears from these findings that Donegal is an area of specialised community work where community development workers focused on either specific groups (for instance, in the survey 45 per cent indicated they worked with unemployed people; 65 per cent worked with families; 60 per cent worked with children; 55 per cent worked with men) or on particular concerns (55 per cent of paid workers

and 33 per cent of unpaid respondents worked in partnership bodies). Graph 21 above summarises the findings of the specific groups that community development workers in the survey worked with.

Level of working time

With regard to the level of working time, Table 15 below gives an overview of the findings of different community work activities performed by both paid and unpaid community development worker over a period of a month.

Table 15 Summary of level of working time by paid and unpaid CDWs over a period of month

Measures	Motivations	% of Paid CDWs replies	% of Unpaid CDWs replies
Supporting Campaigns			
	Rarely	40%	0%
	Very Little	30%	12%
	Some	20%	38%
	A lot	10%	50%
Advocacy on behalf of community			
	Rarely	0%	12%
	Very Little	20%	0%
	Some	60%	25%
	A lot	20%	63%
Advocacy on behalf of individual			
	Rarely	0%	12%
	Very Little	30%	0%
	Some	70%	25%
	A lot	0%	63%
Assisting own management and admin groups			
	Rarely	20%	0%
	Very Little	0%	0%
	Some	30%	12%
	A lot	50%	88%
Capacity building / training			
	Rarely	0%	0%
	Very Little	15%	0%
	Some	10%	38%
	A lot	75%	62%

Facilitating or supporting consultation			
	Rarely	0%	0%
	Very Little	20%	0%
	Some	40%	25%
	A lot	40%	75%
Policy Development			
	Rarely	10%	50%
	Very Little	20%	25%
	Some	50%	0%
	A lot	20%	25%
Facilitating and supporting individual / small informal groups / self-help groups			
	Rarely	0%	0%
	Very Little	0%	37%
	Some	60%	38%
	A lot	40%	25%
Networking			
	Rarely	0%	0%
	Very Little	0%	0%
	Some	40%	63%
	A lot	60%	37%
Supervise other unpaid community workers			
	Rarely	20%	75%
	Very Little	10%	13%
	Some	30%	12%
	A lot	40%	0%
Research and Evaluation			
	Rarely	0%	25%
	Very Little	10%	25%
	Some	50%	50%
	A lot	40%	0%
Inter-agency work			
	Rarely	20%	0%
	Very Little	0%	0%
	Some	30%	37%
	A lot	50%	63%

As can be gleaned from Table 15, the survey findings indicate that, at least in terms of levels of working time over a period of a month, the work of community development workers' was broad ranging. The responses show that community development workers in Donegal were focused on the issues that one would expect them to be working on, notably advocacy, networking and inter-agency work. Community development workers surveyed undertook a wide range of

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community development work to fulfil the responsibilities that contribute to community development.

Working methods

From the survey with unpaid workers, four clear working methods emerged where respondents had adopted working roles typical of community development methods and similar to those taken by paid workers. These were:

1. Empowering and supporting individuals' involvement;
2. Enabling the development of new and existing groups;
3. Identifying assets and capacities that are latent within communities;
4. Building capacity that allows community to share knowledge and resources effectively.

When paid worker respondents were asked to choose from a list of working methods in order of importance to their work, the strengths of the working methods chosen ranged from building capacity to enabling the development of new and existing community groups. However, there were strong feelings about the benefits of a paid community development worker having a close connection to the community. The identified working methods were ranked as following:

1. Building capacity that allow community to share knowledge and resources effectively;
2. Empowering and supporting individuals' involvement;
3. Identifying assets and capacities that are latent within communities;
4. Identifying needs;
5. Promoting community involvement in governance;
6. Addressing needs of the specific group working with;
7. Collaborative work (which is forming partnership with the community or doing inter-agency work);
8. Networking with existing community groups;
9. Enabling the development of new and existing community groups

The rankings suggest a reality of considerable time spent on one-to-one work by paid community development workers in Donegal to support and encourage

community members' involvement. This is evidenced by the second ranking given by respondents to 'Empowerment and supporting individuals' involvement'.

4. 9 Organizational management and development

The survey obtained information regarding decision making, networking and appraisal of performances about community development workers.

4. 9.1 Decision-making

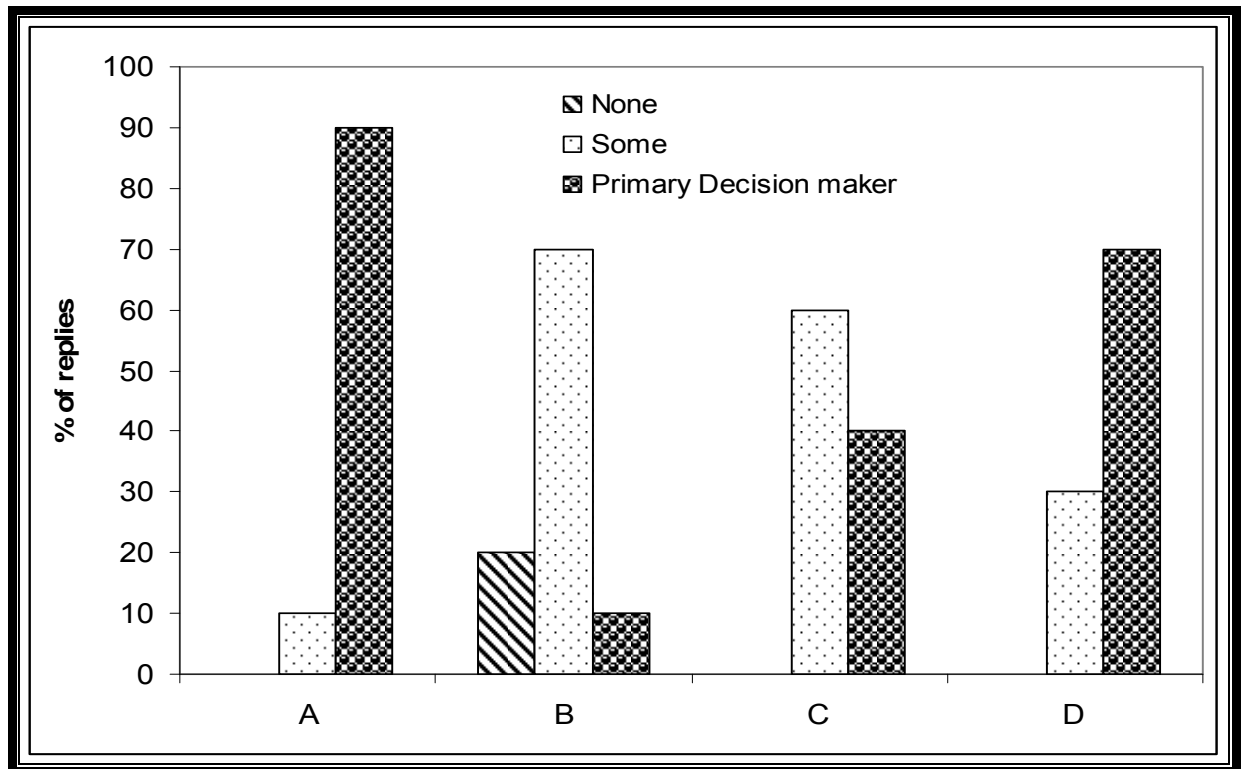
The findings in this section suggest an alternative explanation for the relationships between the community development worker and his or her organization.

The survey findings indicated that 40 per cent of paid community development workers were involved in decision-making processes. The majority (75 per cent) of these respondents were employed in the voluntary sector. A further 60 per cent of paid community development workers stated that they were not involved in decision-making processes in their organization (see Table 16).

Table 16 Involvement in decision-making by paid CDWs surveyed

Q 45 Are you involved in decision making processes in your organization?	No of respondents	% of replies
Yes	8	40%
No	12	60%

The survey also showed the extent of community development workers' participation in decision-making on community work practice, training, work priorities for the organization and budget and expenditure.



Graph 22 Decisions participation of paid community development workers surveyed:

- A Community work practice
- B Training (for you)
- C Work priorities for organization
- D Budgets/expenditure

Over 90 per cent of the paid community development workers surveyed were primary decision-makers in community work practice in their employing organization. Just 10 per cent of paid worker respondents indicated they participated in community work practice in 'some' way. This indicated that the majority of paid community development workers surveyed do generally participate in decisions that are integral to community work in their organization.

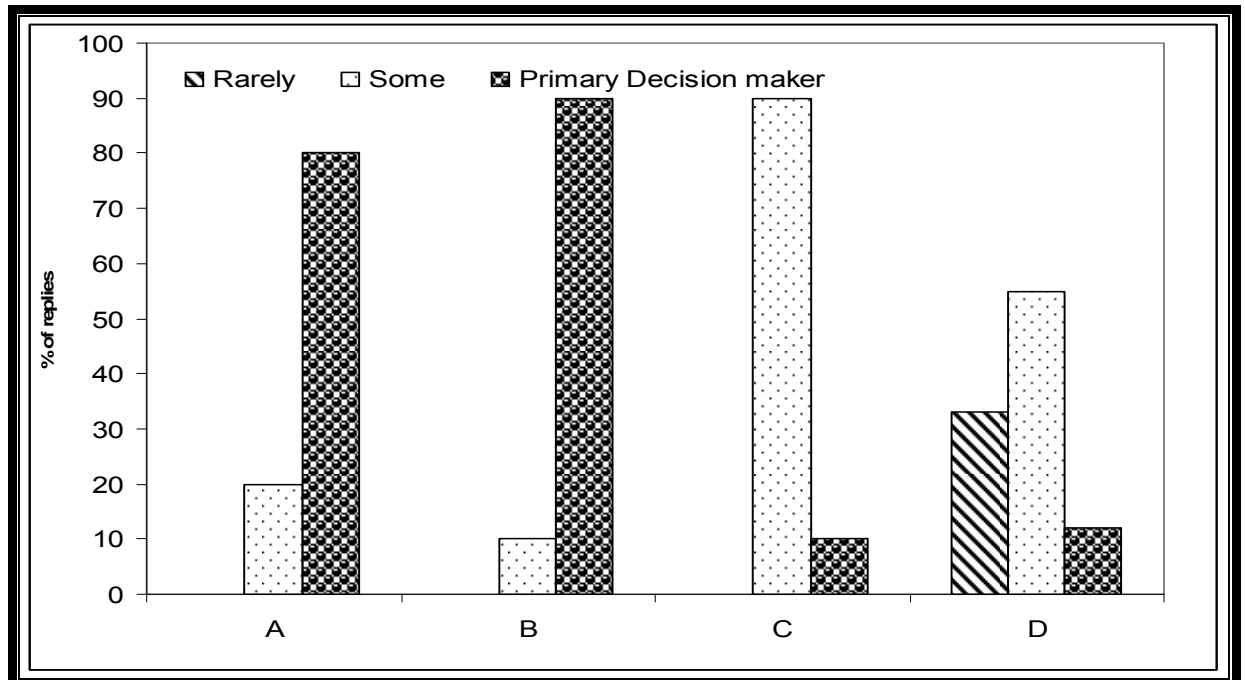
Among paid worker respondents, 70 per cent indicated they also participated in 'some' way in decision-making about their training; 20 per cent indicated 'none' for participation but 10 per cent said that they were primary decision-maker in training. This indicated different levels of participation in decision-making among

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different paid community development workers in the organization they worked for.

Findings on work priorities for organizations suggested that more than half of the paid worker respondents (55 per cent) indicated 'some' decision-making participation, while 40 per cent indicated they were 'primary decision-maker' in work priorities for the organization. It might suggest that many paid community development workers surveyed do generally feel able to participate with autonomy and freedom in setting up their work priorities for the organization they worked for.

In relation to participation in decisions on budgets and expenditure, over two-thirds (68 per cent) of paid worker respondents indicated they were the primary decision-maker. Just under one-third (30 per cent) indicated they had some involvement or decision-making participation in the organization's budgets and expenditure.



Graph 23 Participation in decisions by unpaid community development workers surveyed

A Community work practice

B Training (for you)

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C Work priorities for organization

D Budgets/expenditure

For unpaid community development workers, a significant proportion (25 per cent) stated they participated in decision-making and management of the community group or organization. The majority (80 per cent) of unpaid community development workers surveyed indicated that they worked as part of a community work team; 20 per cent claimed they worked as part of a team with community activists or volunteers.

In relation to the area of decision-making in which unpaid community development workers participated, the level of unpaid respondents' participation was significant in community work practice (where 80 per cent of unpaid worker respondents were primary decision-maker); training (where 90 per cent of the unpaid respondents were the primary decision-maker), and work priorities (where 90 per cent of respondents participated in some of the decision-making on work priorities). Nonetheless, it was evident that a significant proportion (33 per cent) of unpaid workers surveyed 'rarely' participated in budget and expenditure decision-making (see Graph 23).

4. 9. 2 Networking

In the survey, paid worker respondents were asked if the major part of their work involved exchanging information through networking or building alliances with community development workers in other organizations. Respondents were asked to indicate Yes or No. The findings showed that the majority of respondents (88 per cent) stated 'Yes'. This might indicate that there may be a high degree of networking practices among paid community development workers in our survey area.

When unpaid worker respondents were asked this question, 41 per cent of them indicated 'Yes'. Even given the high percentage of unpaid worker respondents who indicated 'No' (59 per cent), there is enough evidence to suggest that

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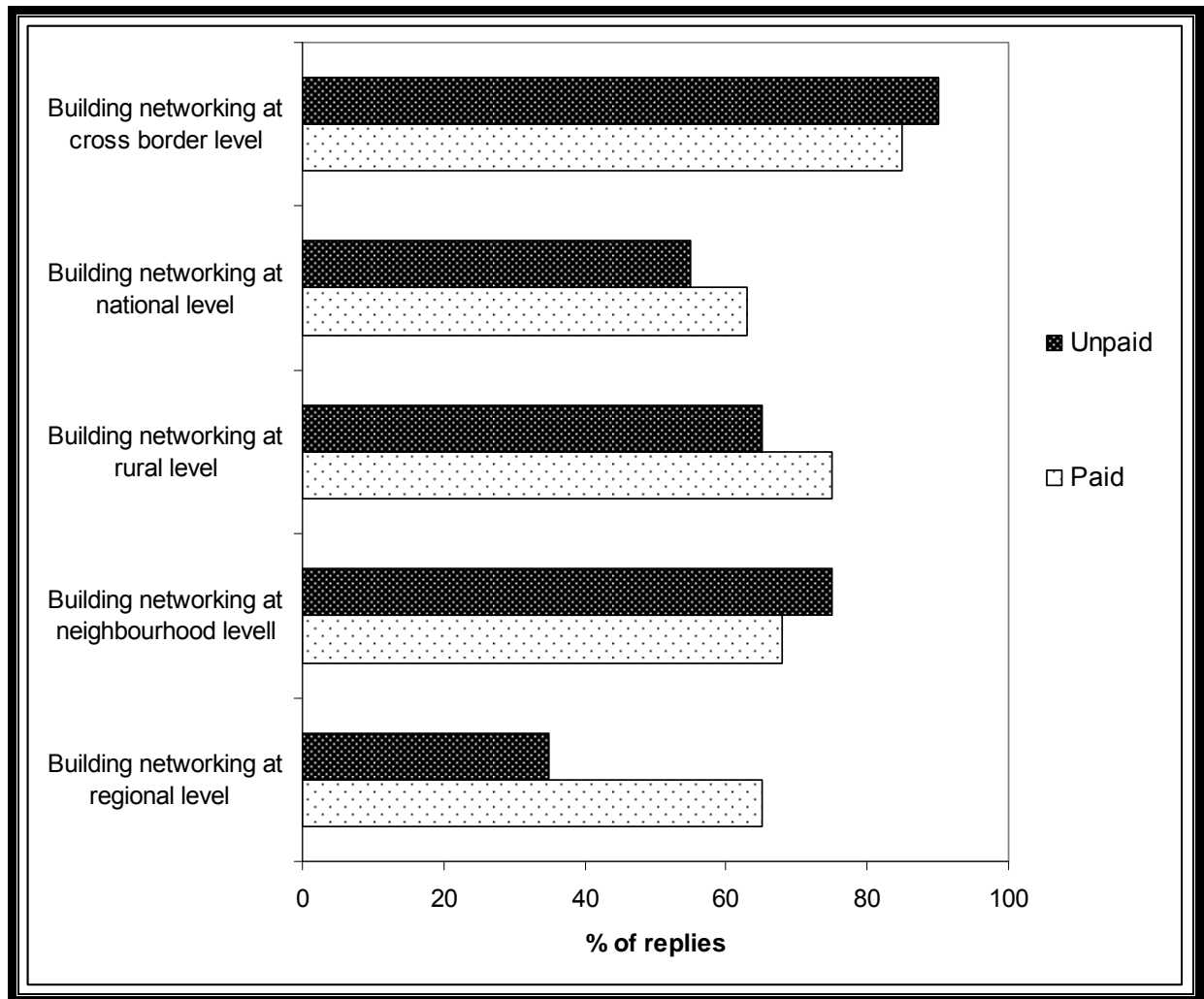
unpaid workers surveyed networked with other unpaid community development workers in other organizations to address the needs of their community.

The data shows that for many community development workers surveyed, their working environment dealt significantly with cross-border areas. The scale of actual networking they do with other community development workers in other organizations is depicted in Graph 24. This shows that a large majority of community development workers surveyed (85 per cent paid workers; 90 per cent unpaid workers) claimed to build networking at cross-border level. It suggests a high degree of community development activity among community development workers on both sides of the border in Donegal.

It is surprising that building networking at cross-border level represented a large proportion of respondents' time, given that the respondents, in ranking working methods (as discussed earlier), had placed both 'development of new and existing community groups' and 'networking' down the list of working methods. Perhaps this suggests the importance of networking both as a working method and also a support mechanism for community development workers in Donegal. Therefore, in future studies, a distinction should be made between these.

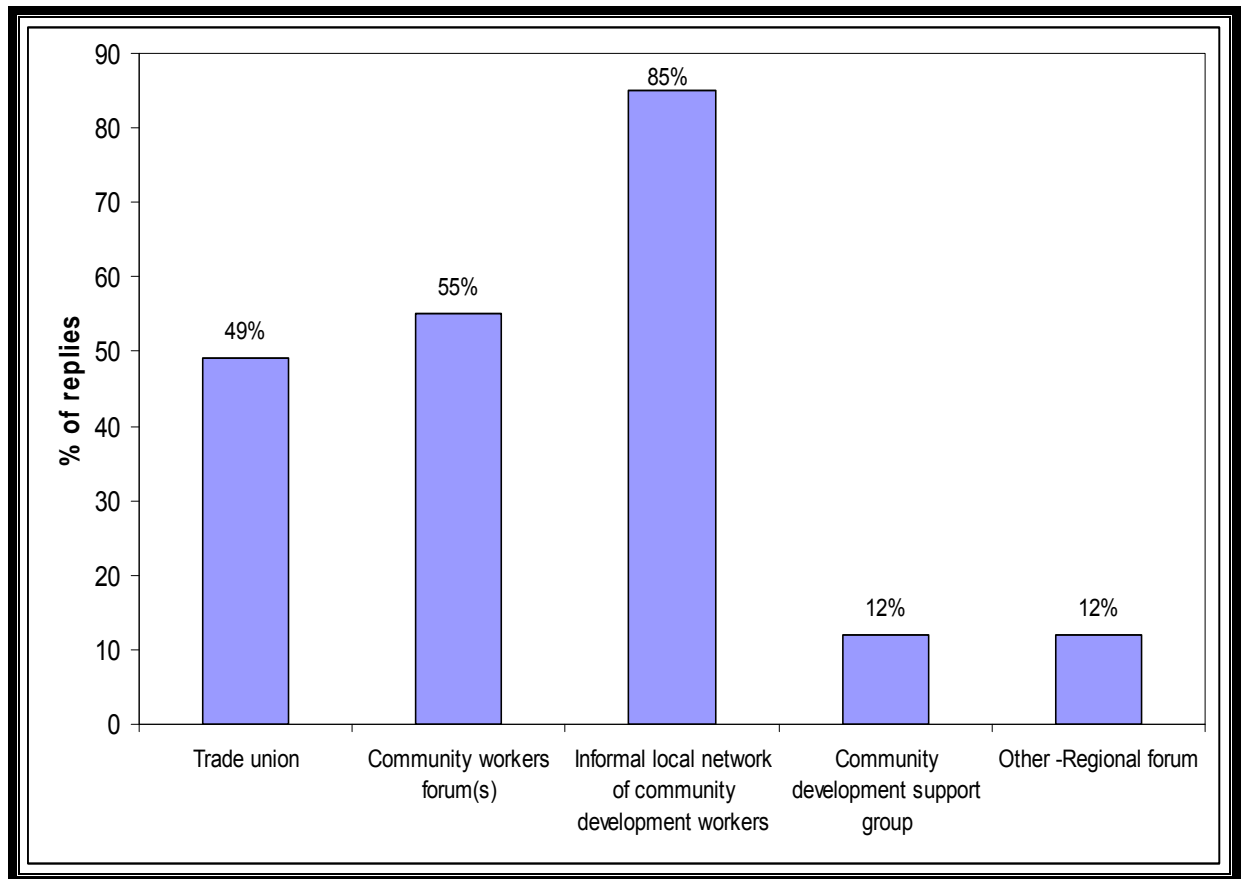
Context of network participation

Paid worker respondents were asked to indicate from a list the context of their networking participation. A majority of paid community development workers surveyed (85 per cent) identified that their network participation was in the context of informal local networking. From this one could conclude that the awareness of community development work in Donegal was built upon informal local networks.



Graph 24 Scale of network building by community development workers surveyed

A significant proportion of paid workers surveyed (49 per cent) also stated that they participated in trade unions as part of their networking. This suggested that trade unions were seen as a network support in Donegal. It indicated that a significant proportion of paid worker respondents considered using trade unions to solve an issue and start a union campaign to address a community issue. In addition to participation in a trade union, a larger proportion of paid worker respondents (55 per cent) also identified a community workers' forum and a further identified a community development support group as the context in which they followed their community development work practice (see Graph 25).



Graph 25 Context of network participation among paid community development workers surveyed

Exchanging information

Asked if they had often experienced a problem exchanging information, 49 per cent of paid community development worker respondents stated that they had. Many of the respondents who said they had experienced problems ascribed these to, in their words, secretiveness about community organization plans; lack of resources for sharing information; and reluctance on the part of some community organizations:

“There is a tendency for some community groups to be secretive about their plans, which results in unwillingness to share information.’

(Female, 50–59 age category)

‘There are no CDP resources for this, not always seen as important.’

(Male, 50–59 age category)

‘Some organizations are reluctant to exchange information.’

(Female, 30–59 age category)

Withholding information also could indicate a competition over funding because the majority of community development workers surveyed saw funding as an issue. Nonetheless, it appears from this finding that community development organizations need to review how they share information with other community development workers in other community development organizations to ensure the exchange of examples of good community work practice in Donegal.

4. 10. Appraisal of performance

Appraisal of performance is essential for community development workers if they are to develop the capacity to identify problems and promote solutions. It is the process that measures and evaluates workers’ past performance in their organization and this assessment can help in identifying skill gaps and training needs.

When paid worker respondents were asked to indicate if their work involved a process of supervision or support to improve work performance, a majority of paid worker respondents (90 per cent) said ‘Yes’, while a significant proportion of respondents (10 per cent) do not know if their work underwent a process of supervision or support (see Table 17). There was a pattern, though, that indicated that a majority of community organizations in Donegal were using appraisal techniques to improve their employees’ work performance. For future studies it is strongly recommended that a distinction be made between supervision and support as they are quite different. Exploring those distinct processes might produce evidence of community development group practice.

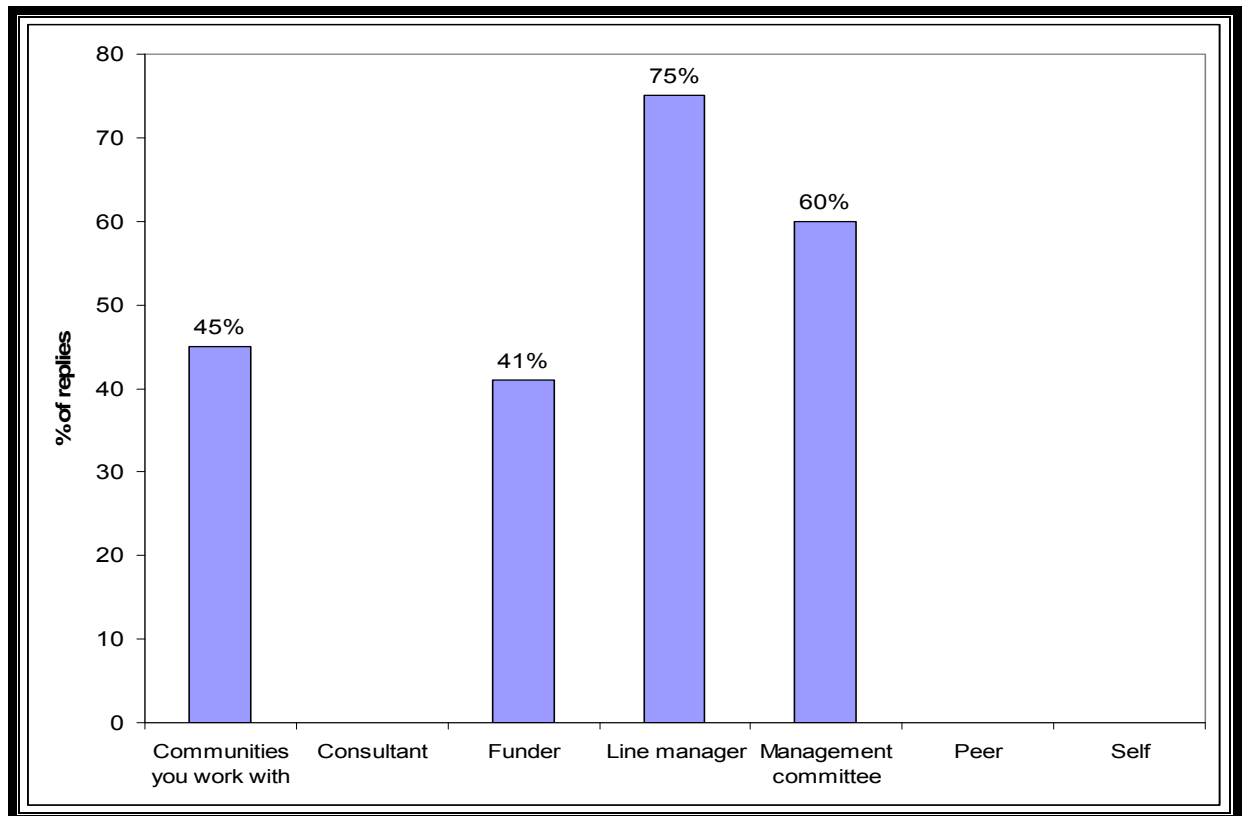
Table 17 Percentage of work supervision or support undergone by paid CDWs surveyed

Q 57 Does your work undergo a process of supervision or support to improve your work performance?	No of respondents	% of replies
Yes	18	90%
No	0	0%
Do not know	2	10%

When asked to identify from a list who took responsibility for appraisal or performance management of their work, respondents identified four categories. These were as follows:

- Communities you work with (45 per cent of respondents),
- Line manager (75 per cent of respondents),
- Management committee (60 per cent),
- Funder (41 per cent).

Graph 26 presents an overview of those responsible for work appraisal or performance as identified by paid worker respondents.



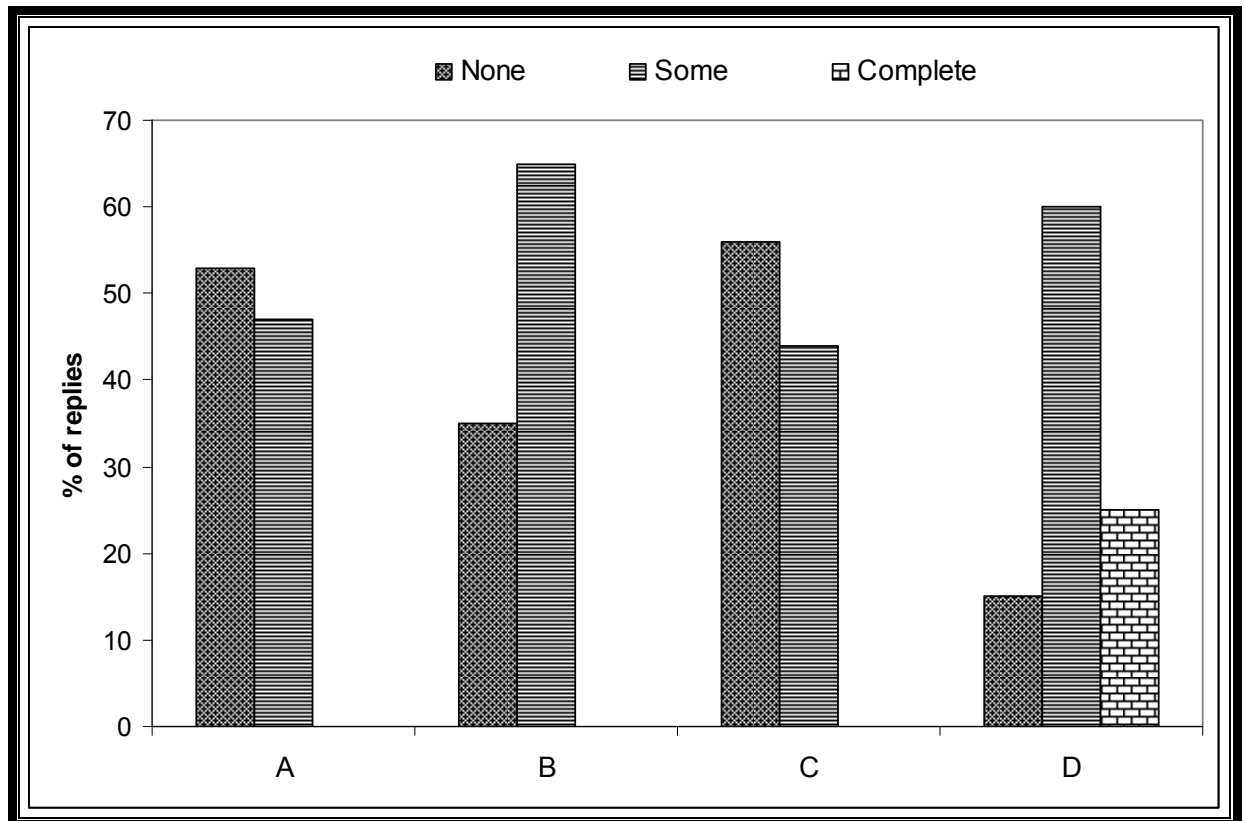
Graph 26 Those responsible for work appraisal or performance as identified by paid community development workers surveyed

When paid community development workers were asked to rate the extent that appraisal/performance contributed to the development of their work, they responded as follows:

On work performance

- 53 per cent of paid community development workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance did not contribute to their work performance,
- 47 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance contributed in some way to their work performance (see Graph 27).

From these results it can be concluded that the performance standards may need to be modified to more accurately reflect the work performance requirement in our survey area.



Graph 27 Extent that appraisal/performance contributed to the development of community development work as identified by paid community development workers surveyed

A Work performance (for you)

B Training (for you)

C Organization management (for you)

D Achievement/difficulties (for you).

On training;

- 35 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance did not contribute to their training,
- 65 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance contributed in some way to their training.

On organization management;

- 56 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance did not contribute to their organization management.

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- 44 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said appraisal/performance contributed in some way to their organization management.

From this response we can conclude that one reason why a large proportion of respondents (56 per cent) indicated that appraisal /performance management had not contributed to their organization management work might be that performance management is not optimally implemented among paid community development workers in Donegal or because job descriptions were inappropriate to their work in community development. We can make use of verification workshop technique to understand these issues.

On achievement and difficulties;

- 15 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance management did not contribute to their achievements or difficulties,
- 60 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said that appraisal/performance had contributed in some way to their achievements or difficulties,
- 25 per cent of the paid workers surveyed said appraisal/performance had contributed in complete way to their achievements or difficulties.

By better aligning performance with achievements or difficulties, appraisal or performance management has an important contribution to make in knowing what community development workers have achieved and the difficulties they have faced. From the findings above it can be concluded that appraisal or performance management has contributed significantly to the achievements and difficulties of a large proportion (85 per cent) of paid community workers who responded.

Summary

Based on what we have learned from the survey findings about community development workers surveyed in Donegal, a profile of community development workers and organizations in Donegal can be drawn.

- The community development workers (paid and unpaid) in the study were typically female, and had a high proportion of white settled Irish population;

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- A majority of community development workers in the study chose a career in community development work from the late 1990s;
- Most community development workers in the study had a long track record of voluntary and community development work before their current post;
- A majority of paid community development workers in the study were employed within a local action or issue-based organization;
- Many community development workers in the study (paid and unpaid) were engaged in cross-community projects and border partnerships;
- The majority of paid workers in the study took up a wide range of personal roles in tackling local community development actions and specific community development issues;
- Most paid community development workers in the study worked on a full-time basis with a significant proportion on renewable contracts;
- A majority of paid workers who earned more than the median salary for government and non-profit organizations in Donegal worked in the statutory sector;
- Involvement levels of paid workers in the study varied from 31 to 40 hours per week. While this is quite low, it might suggest that we need to include in the paid worker questionnaire questions about night work and weekend work. The average hours worked by the unpaid worker was three and half hours per week;
- Most paid and unpaid community development workers in the study held a primary degree or higher qualification and a significant proportion of them held their qualification within a community development discipline;
- Accredited qualifications in community development tended not to be seen as a requirement for recruiting paid workers for community development posts;
- Considerable time was spent by paid community development workers in Donegal on one-to-one work to support and encourage community members' involvement;

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- Unpaid community development workers in the study valued the importance of self-help training but most indicated that self-help training was not completely valued by their organizations;
- The majority of community development workers in the study indicated a wide range of barriers to training;
- Most community development workers in the study identified a wide range of issues in their current roles that undermined their role as community development worker: Issues included:
 - concerns about administration and funding of projects,
 - conflict between management,
 - lack of enough paid staff,
 - control of community organization by the state through funding,
 - insecurity in careers,
 - lack of clarity about terms and conditions of employment.
- A majority of community development workers in the study indicated they acted as a link with the community working in their neighbourhood;
- Usually there was a mix of working methods, which included the four main methods described below:
 - empowering and supporting individuals' involvement,
 - enabling the development of new and existing groups,
 - identifying assets and capacities that are latent within communities,
 - building capacity that allows community to share knowledge and resources effectively;
- Most community development workers in the study indicate that they worked as part of a community work team;
- Exchange of information was perceived as a problem. It was hindered by secretiveness about the community organization's plans, lack of resources to share information and reluctances on the part of some community organizations.

Community Development Organizations

As identified in figure 1, the study's definition of community development worker is framed by the characterisation of community development workers as paid

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and unpaid workers employed by various community development organizations (e.g. community sector, voluntary sector and statutory sector) to support community development.

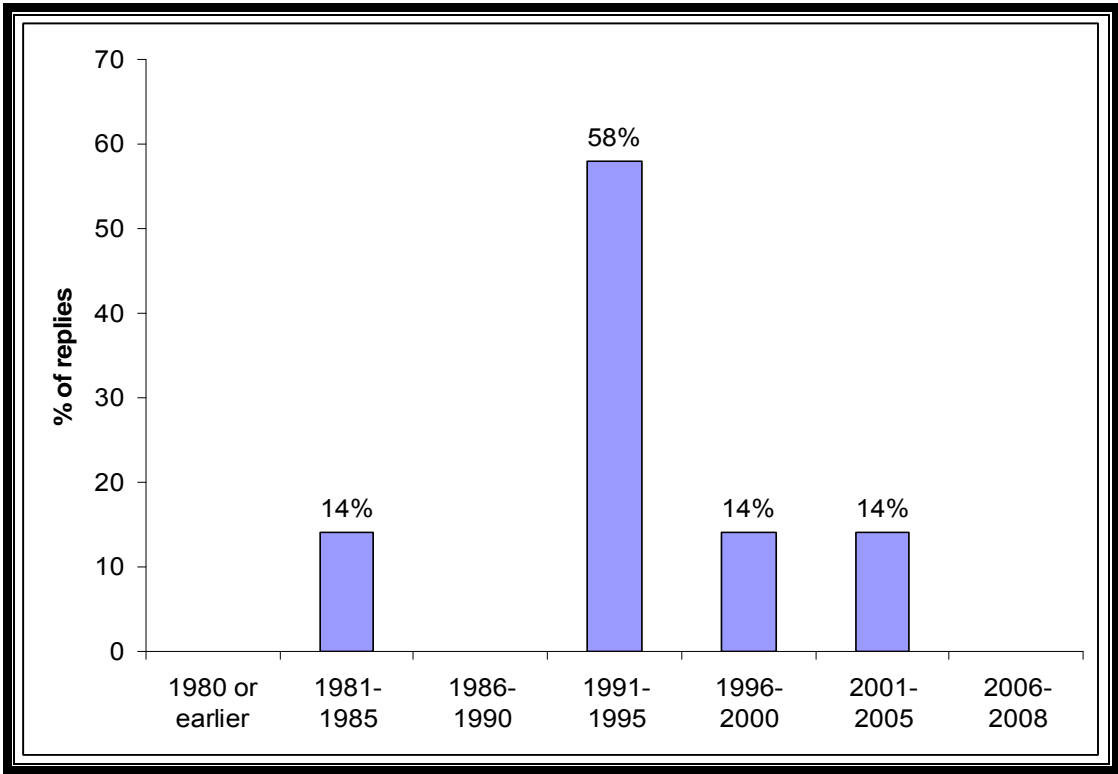
The percentages in this Findings section were drawn from returns of community organization questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled by those who had a leading role within community group or organizations. Again, self-identification indicated that 42 per cent of those who filled in the questionnaire were the chairperson of a community group or organization; 29 per cent were members of a management committee while the remaining 29 per cent were board members.

Chapter 5 Organization structure

5. 1 Organization structure

Year of establishment

The survey (Graph 28 below) shows that community development organizations surveyed in Donegal began to emerge in the 1980s and that 14 per cent of the total surveyed were operational between 1981 and 1985. Growth began in earnest in the 1990s and the majority of the community development organizations surveyed (58 per cent) became established between 1991 and 1995. By the end of 1995 a significant proportion (14 per cent) were also established and another 14 per cent became established between 2001 and 2005.

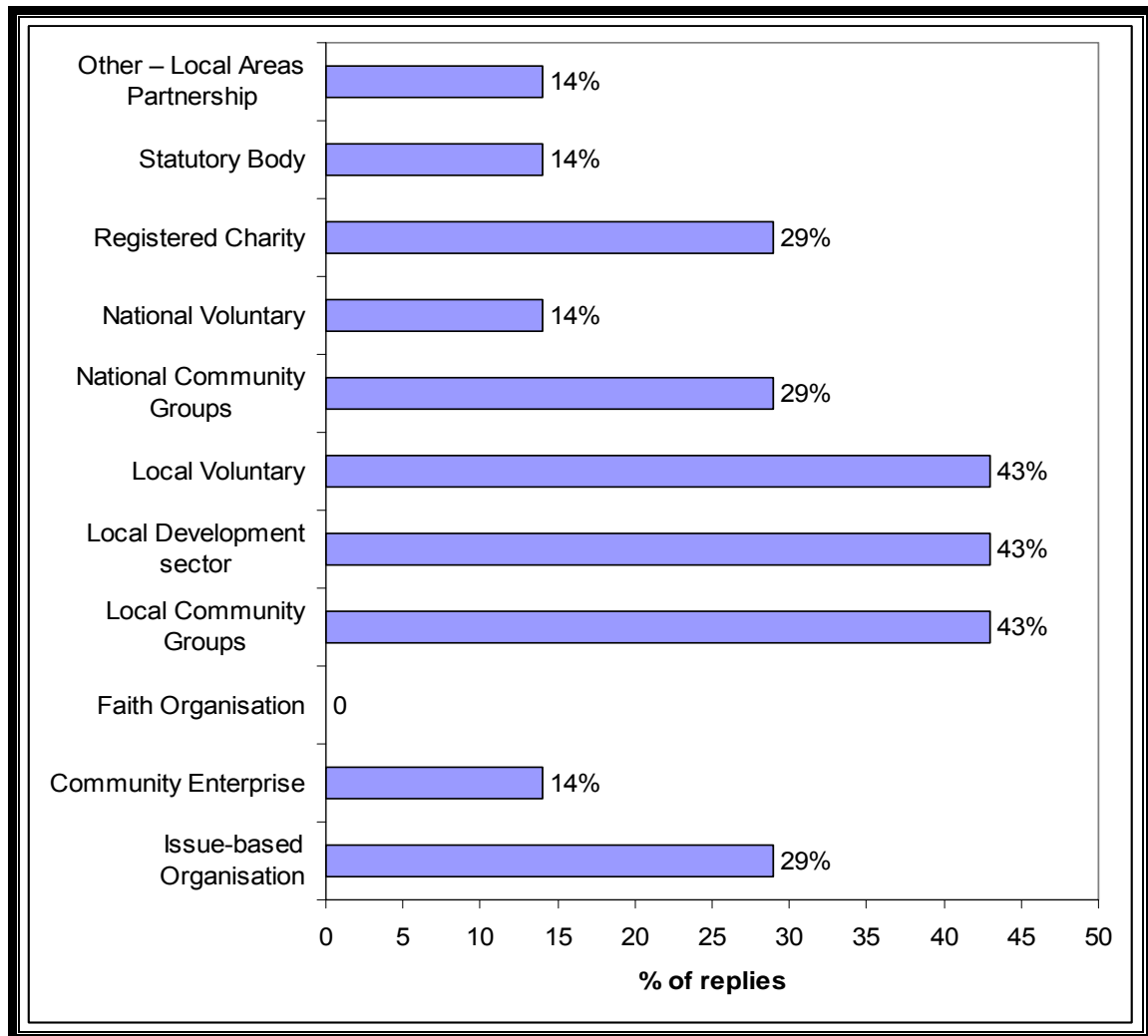


Graph 28 Years of establishment of community development organization surveyed

Organization context

In examining organizational context, a mix of community organizations was found, both in terms of policy focus, for example, whether based on faith, community enterprise, issue or area, and the organizational type. For future study, a distinction should be made between different types and they should be dealt with separately. The survey (Graph 29, below) showed the different types of community development organizations surveyed. The findings showed that the most common types were local voluntary organization (43 per cent); local development sector (43 per cent); and local community groups (43 per cent). The remainder were divided between charitable organizations (29 per cent) and statutory body (14 per cent).

In terms of policy focus among the organizations surveyed, the findings indicated that 29 per cent were issue based, focused on issues like those identified in community development workers' survey and on older people, lone parents, women etc); a further 14 per cent were community enterprise and 14 per cent also were local areas partnerships.



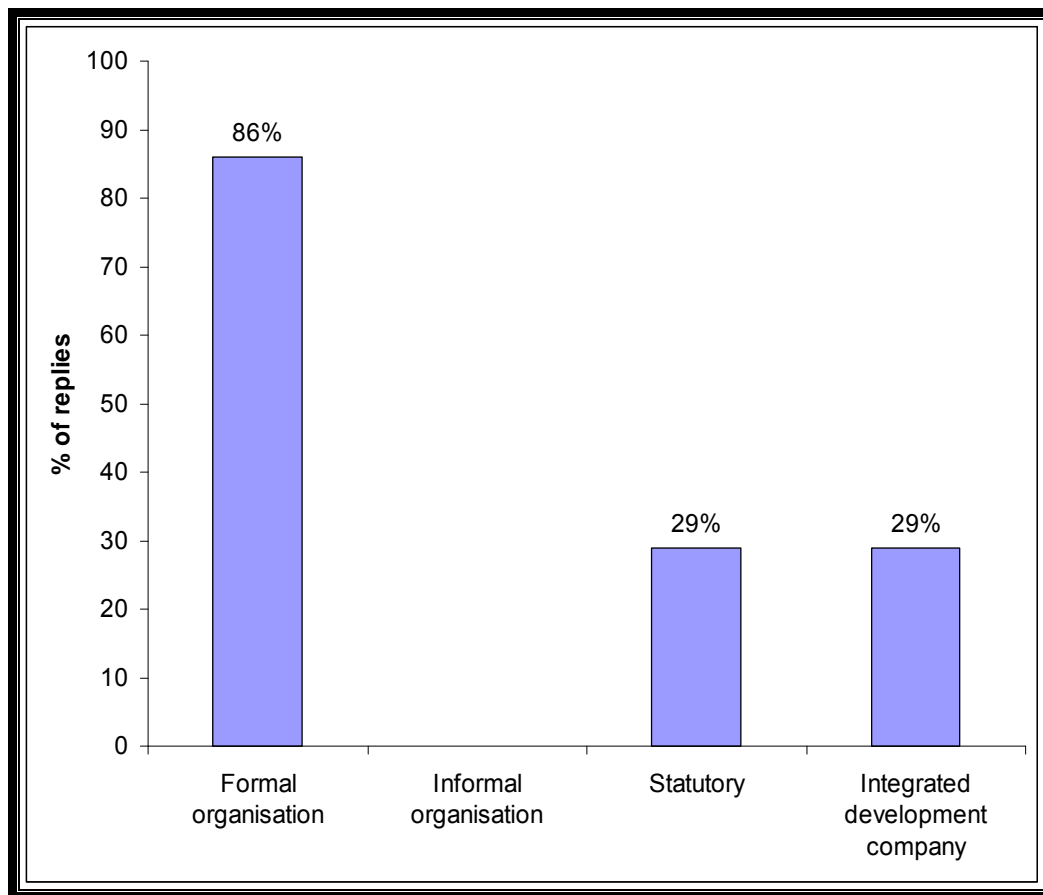
Graph 29 Organisation context of community development organizations surveyed
(Note: Total adds up to more than 100 per cent as organizations choose more than one.)

Organization characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate which statement best described the structure of their organization. As shown in Graph 30, the majority (86 per cent) of the community development organizations surveyed were formal organizations that were run by paid workers and volunteers / community activists and had a constitution, resources and a legal structure with formal links. Following this figure, a significant proportion (29 per cent) were statutory community development organizations and 29 per cent were integrated development companies with a recognized partnership board elected from

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participating agencies, voluntary groups and community groups, and directed by a board.

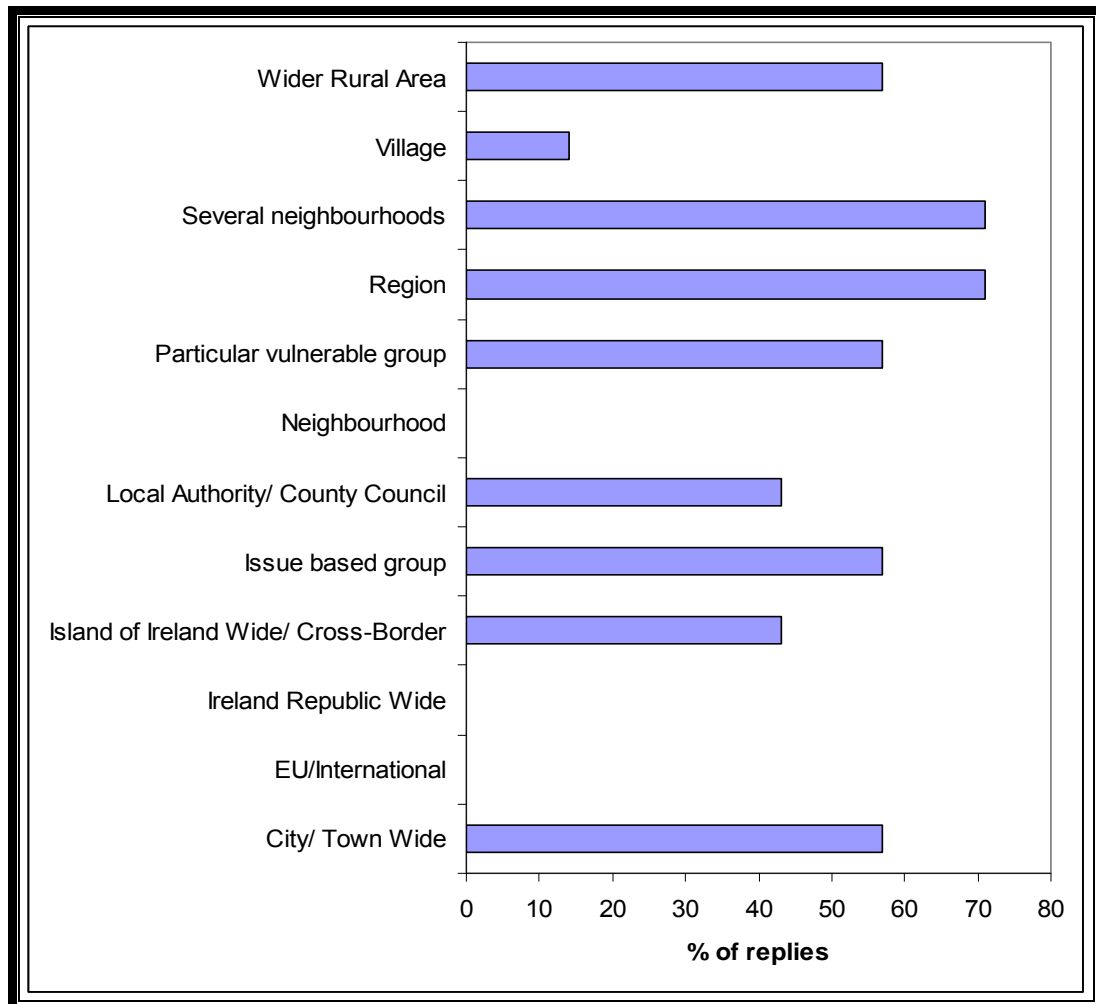


Graph 30 Community development organization structure in Donegal
(Note: Total adds up to more than 100 per cent as Integrated Development Companies (partnerships) double count 'Statutory' and 'Formal' (i.e. community/voluntary) organization.)

Geographical areas target by community development organizations

Respondents were asked to indicate the most important geographic area within which their organization carried out community development work. The important thing to draw from graph 31 is the extent to which community development organizations surveyed in Donegal covered large geographic areas – not only village (14 per cent) but spanning the county region (71 per cent); city or town - wide (57 per cent), extending across the Island of Ireland or cross-border (43 per cent), covering several neighbourhoods (71 per cent); spanning local authority areas (43 per cent) or wider rural areas (57 per cent).

In addition, 57 per cent indicated that their organizations worked within issue-based groups or with particular vulnerable groups (57 per cent). A locality focus was mixed with a focus on target group, vulnerable group or issues. This could confuse respondents and should be separated in a future study.

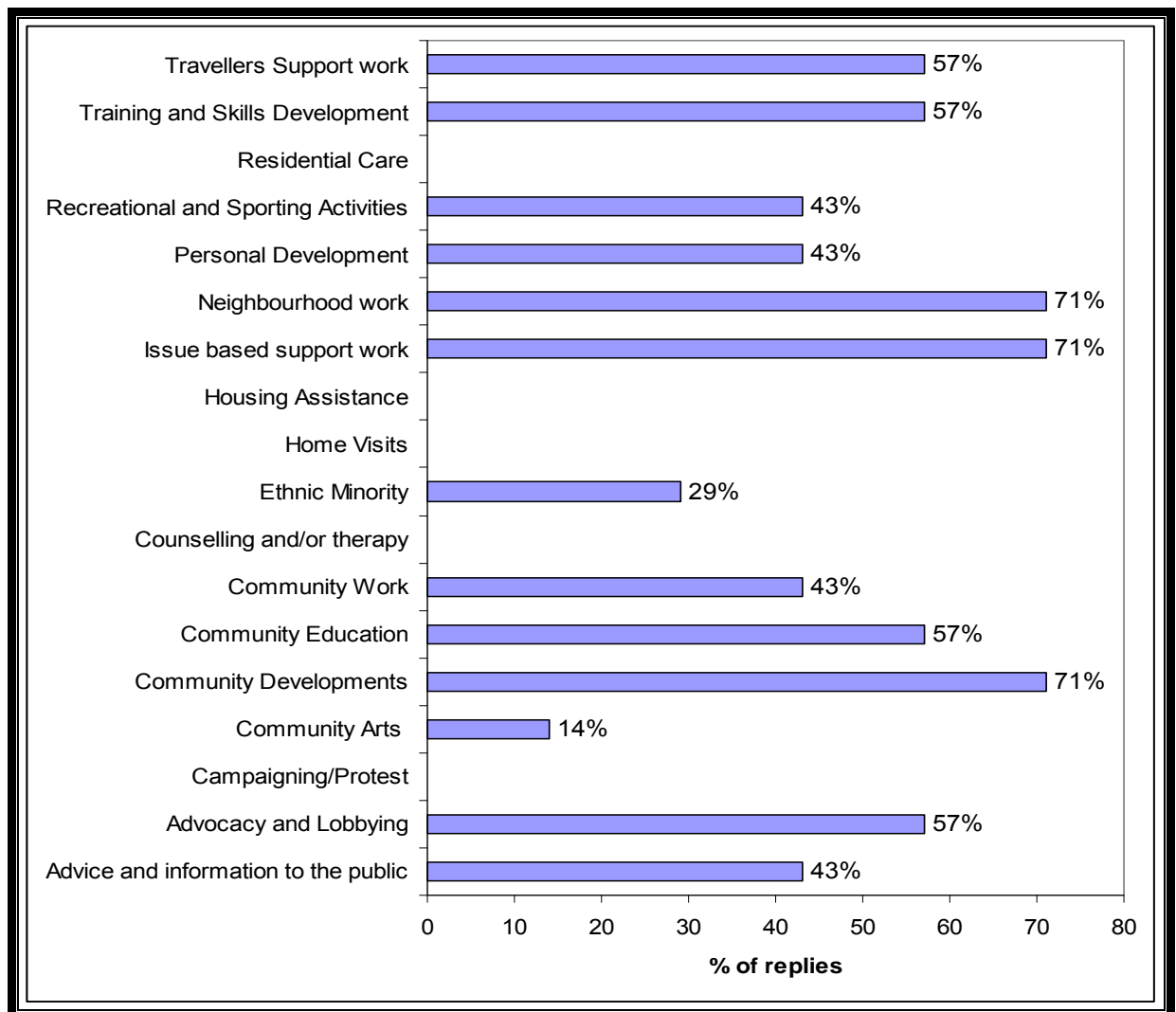


Graph 31 Type of geographical area covered by community development organizations surveyed

Community development organizations' activities

Though work with target groups was mixed with a policy concern, the survey (Graph 32) showed that community development organizations surveyed engaged with a wide range of policies and targeted a range of groups. This finding confirmed the findings about community development workers in their overall range of activities and the type of commitment to community-based action.

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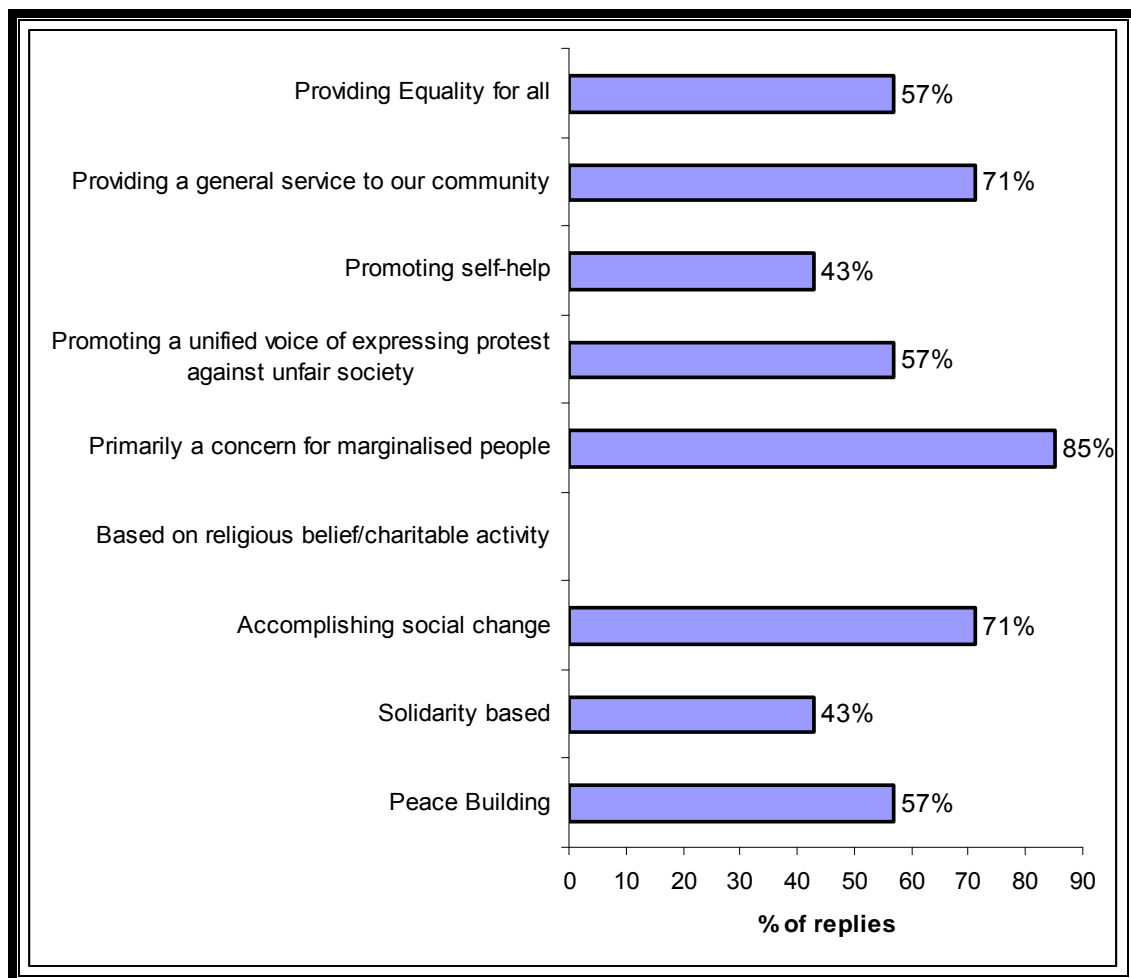
Graph 32 Main work of community development organizations surveyed

Respondents were asked to indicate the main work of their organizations. In Graph 32, neighbourhood work and issue-based support work came out as being the main organization activities (each with 71 per cent replies). These activities were followed by Travellers support network; training and skills development; community education; and advocacy and lobbying (each with 57 per cent replies). Other work included recreational and sporting activities; personal development; community work; and advice and information work to the public (with 43 per cent replies), followed by ethnic minority work (29 per cent) and community arts work (14 per cent). It can be seen that community development organizations in Donegal were significantly well established to

undertake issues-based support work, work on issues affecting a number of groups in the neighbourhood, and community development work.

Community development organizations core values

Insights into the essential set of core values that define, inform and guide community development organizations in their work were obtained when the organizations' value statements were examined. Graph 33 illustrates the range of core values that defined community development organizations surveyed.



Graph 33 Core values of community development organizations surveyed

The main emphases were on 'a concern for marginalized people' (85 per cent); 'providing a general service to community' (71 per cent) and 'accomplishing social change' (71 per cent). 'Peace-building' also had a high level of response (57 per cent), as had 'providing equality for all' (57 per cent) and 'promoting a unified voice in expressing protest against unfair society' (57 per cent).

'Promoting self-help' (43 per cent) and 'solidarity-based' (43 per cent) received a relatively low proportion of responses. It may be possible to use these findings in a national study as a check to see that the organization type 'fits' the remit to be a community development organization and also to identify community development workers in a future survey.

Registration with County Development Board

A related question asked respondents to indicate if their organization was registered with the County (or City) Development Board (CDB). CDBs are important local inter-agency structures. They were set up to promote co-operation and co-ordination of local services between state agencies, local development bodies, the community and voluntary sector and local government. They operate under the umbrella of local authorities.

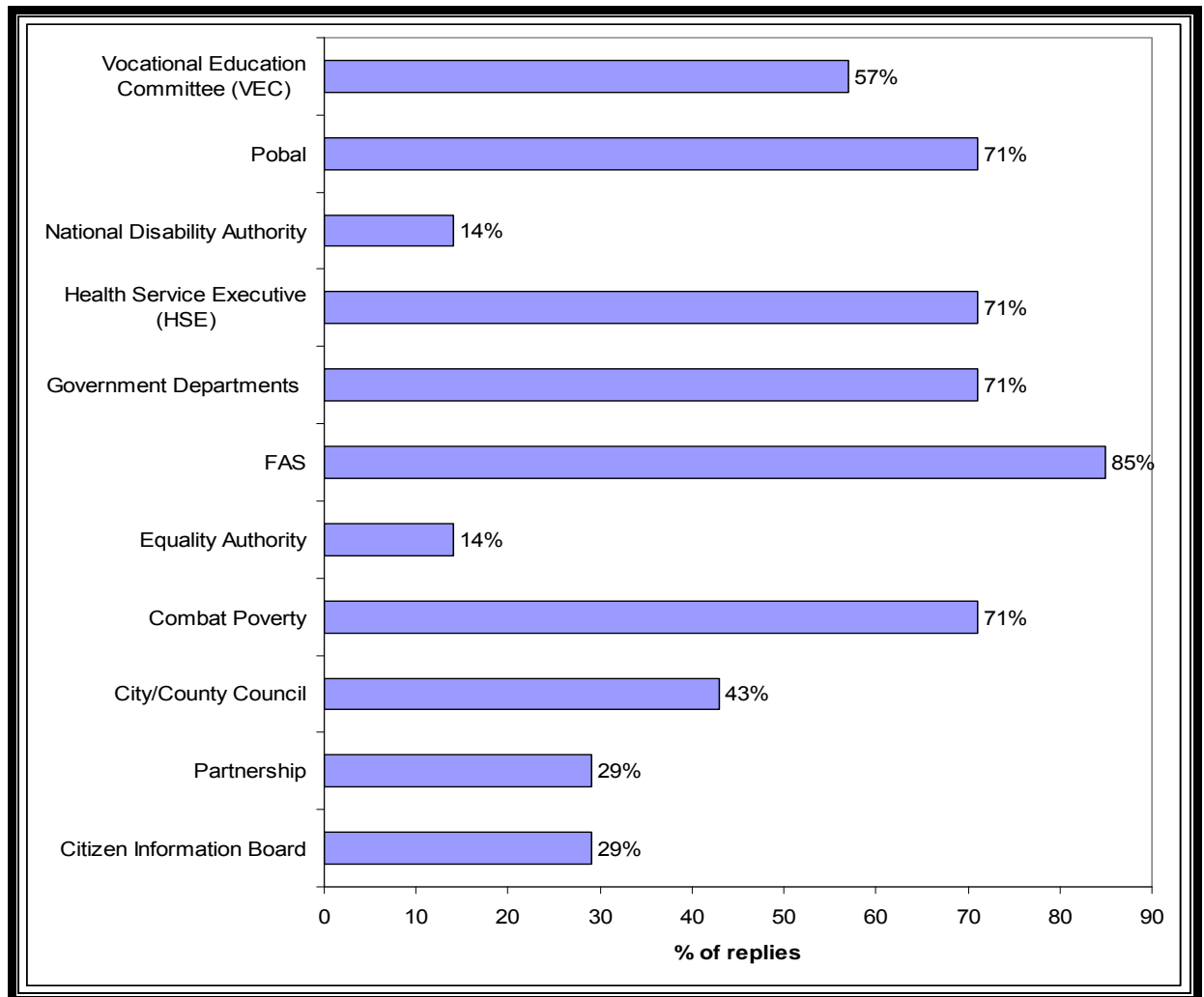
The survey showed that 71 per cent of the community development organizations surveyed were registered with the County Development Board. It might be possible to use this finding in a national study as a method for mapping community development organizations on a county and regional basis.

5.2 Organization strategy

Relationship with the state/development agencies

Respondents were asked if their organization had an ongoing relationship with state or development agencies whose plan or agenda had an impact on community development. All the respondents answered 'Yes', which indicates that there was certainty as to the importance of forming a relationship with state and development agencies.

The issue of community organizations' relationship with the state and development agencies returned to in the next question. Respondents were asked to indicate which state or departmental agencies their organization liaised with. The important point to draw from Graph 34 is the extent to which community development organizations surveyed were forming relationships with state departments or agencies whose plan and agenda had an impact on community development.



Graph 34 Percentages of those state departments/agencies that community development organizations surveyed had relations with.

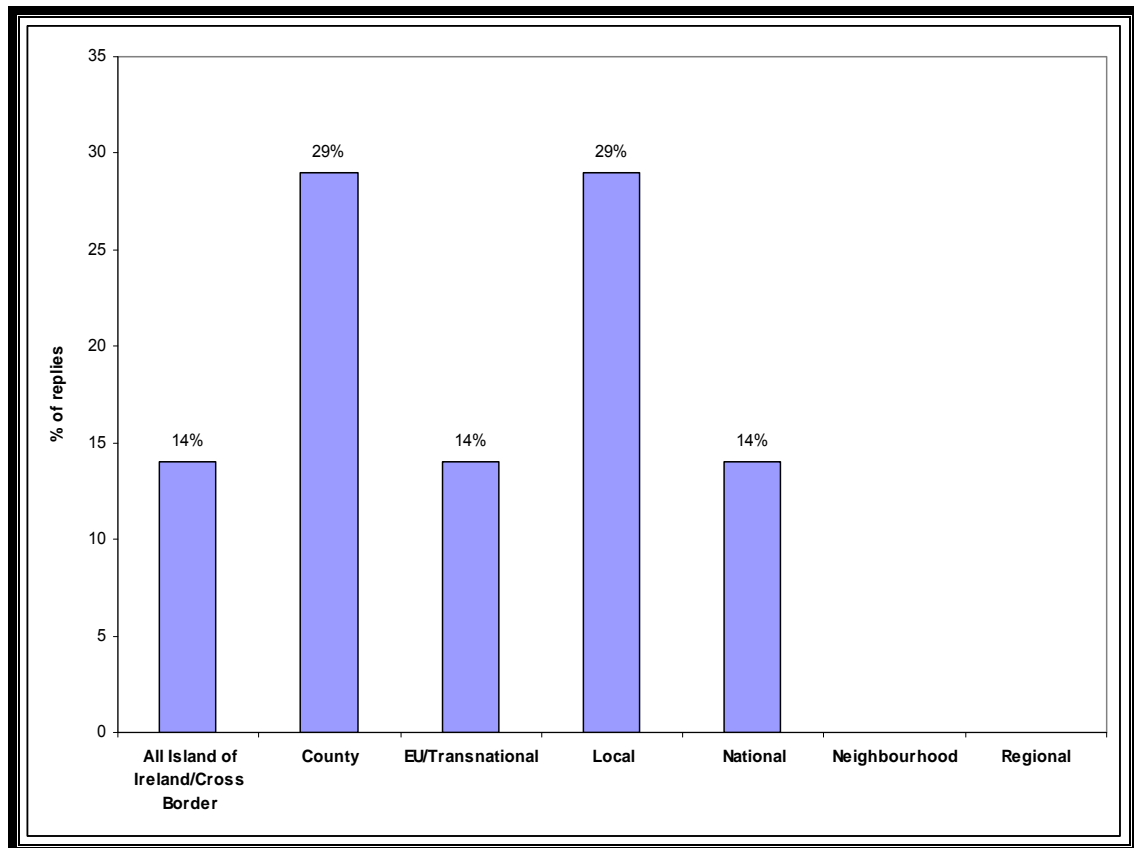
Graph 34 indicates that community organizations surveyed greatly valued the vital role played in community development by the various state departments and agencies. The largest proportion of replies indicated FÁS (85 per cent) while 71 per cent stated the Combat Poverty Agency and Pobal (71 per cent). A significant proportion (71 per cent) of community organizations related with government departments but the range of departments was mixed and included the departments of Social and Family Affairs (80 per cent); Transport (40 per cent), Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (80 per cent); Environment, Heritage and Local Government (20 per cent); Health and Children (60 per cent); and Justice, Equality and Law Reform (20 per cent).

In Graph 34 there is a more detailed breakdown of the replies. A very strong link to government and EU policies was evident from the findings with 85 per cent of the community organizations surveyed indicating multiple forms of relationship with state departments and agencies whose plans and agendas has an impact on community development. This may be an issue in terms of sustainability for projects that depended so closely on such programmes. It may also to explain the limited focus on 'campaigning/ protest' as a method in community development work (this was discussed earlier in the community development workers section).

Network/partnership with other community organization or groups

Respondents were asked if their organization was involved or had links with other community development groups or organizations. All the respondents answered 'Yes'. This indicates that there was certainty among the community development organizations surveyed about the importance of forming partnerships with other community development groups or organizations to identify resources and to address local issues and problems within their communities.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the level of their organization's networking or partnership with other community development organizations or groups.



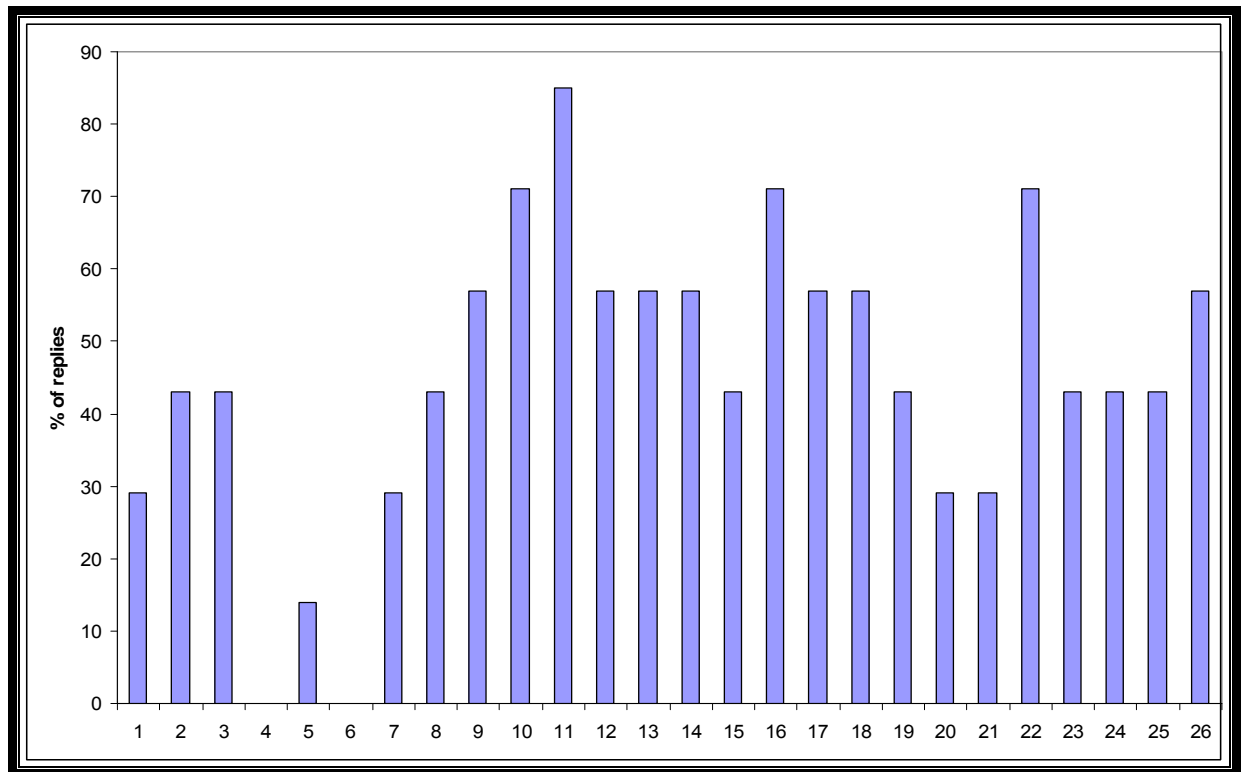
Graph 35 Level of network/partnership with other community development organizations/groups

The proportions vary, with a 29 per cent level of networking and partnership indicated at county level and another 29 per cent indicated at local level. The level of networking on an island of Ireland and cross-border basis was 14 per cent. The level of networking on an EU-wide or transnational basis was 14 per cent and on a national basis the proportion was 14 per cent (see graph 35).

Policy Areas

The survey showed (Graph 39) that community development organizations surveyed engaged with a wide range of policy issues. This finding confirms the generic, cross-cutting nature of community development work in Donegal. Respondents were asked to indicate which policy areas or types of work they focused on.

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Graph 36 Community development organizations surveyed engaged with the following policy areas:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Ex-Prisoners | 14. Lone parents |
| 2. Human Rights | 15. Men's Issues |
| 3. Arts (music, drama, etc) | 16. Immigration (migrant workers, refugee, etc) |
| 4. Built Environment | 17. Information |
| 5. Community Care | 18. Prisoners |
| 6. Community Safety/crime | 19. Travellers |
| 7. Disability | 20. Mental health |
| 8. Domestic Violence | 21. Regeneration |
| 9. Economic Development (including Rural development) | 22. Social Inclusion |
| 10. Education and training (including literacy) | 23. Substance Misuse |
| 11. Employment (Access to employment, includes unemployment) | 24. Welfare Rights |
| 12. Health | 25. Women Rights |
| 13. Housing and Homelessness | 26. Youth Work (including children rights) |

In the graph, employment (access to employment includes unemployment) emerged as the priority policy issue (85 per cent). This explains why the majority of community development organizations surveyed dealt with FÁS. We can also see that community development organizations in Donegal responded to a broad range of disadvantaged and excluded groups, including lone parents (57 per cent); disability (29 per cent); and policy issues of social inclusion (71 per cent).

A significant proportion of community organizations surveyed worked with

minority ethnic groups represented by Travellers (43 per cent) and immigrant workers and refugee (71 per cent).

5.3 Organization management

All community development organization respondents were asked to provide information about their organization management. The questions covered:

- Decision-making,
- Strategic plan;
- Work plan;
- Work review.

Decision-making

Decision-making processes within the community development organizations was also surveyed. Mechanism for participation in decision-making was also examined. Findings from these questions indicate a complex picture (see table 18).

Table 18 Decision-making process of community development organizations surveyed

Q13 How would you describe the way decisions are made in your organization?	% of all replies
Everybody's opinion is sought and taken into account before decision is made by management	71%
The board of management and/or steering group makes decisions on behalf of the organization as a whole	29%
In practice we have a board of management or a steering group, but the decisions are taken by the group as a whole	43%
The final decision always rest with board of management and/or steering group	57%
The final decision always rest with group leader and or manager	0%
Everybody's opinion is sought and taken into account before decision is made	29%

This study shows that decision-making in a community organization was a complex process that was influenced by a large number of factors determining participation. If decision making is to be done successfully in community development organizations it ought to be viewed as a mutual decision-making

process where obstacles are identified and discussed and solutions shared among community development workers and staff.

Although this statement on mutual decision-making is somewhat prescriptive, its essence might be deduced from the practices described by respondents. For instance, although the findings revealed that in 29 per cent of cases the board of management or a steering group made decisions on behalf of the organization as a whole; and that in 57 per cent of cases the final decisions always rested with the board of management or steering group, nevertheless in the process used in the largest proportion of cases (71 per cent) everybody's opinion was sought and taken into account before a decision was made by management.

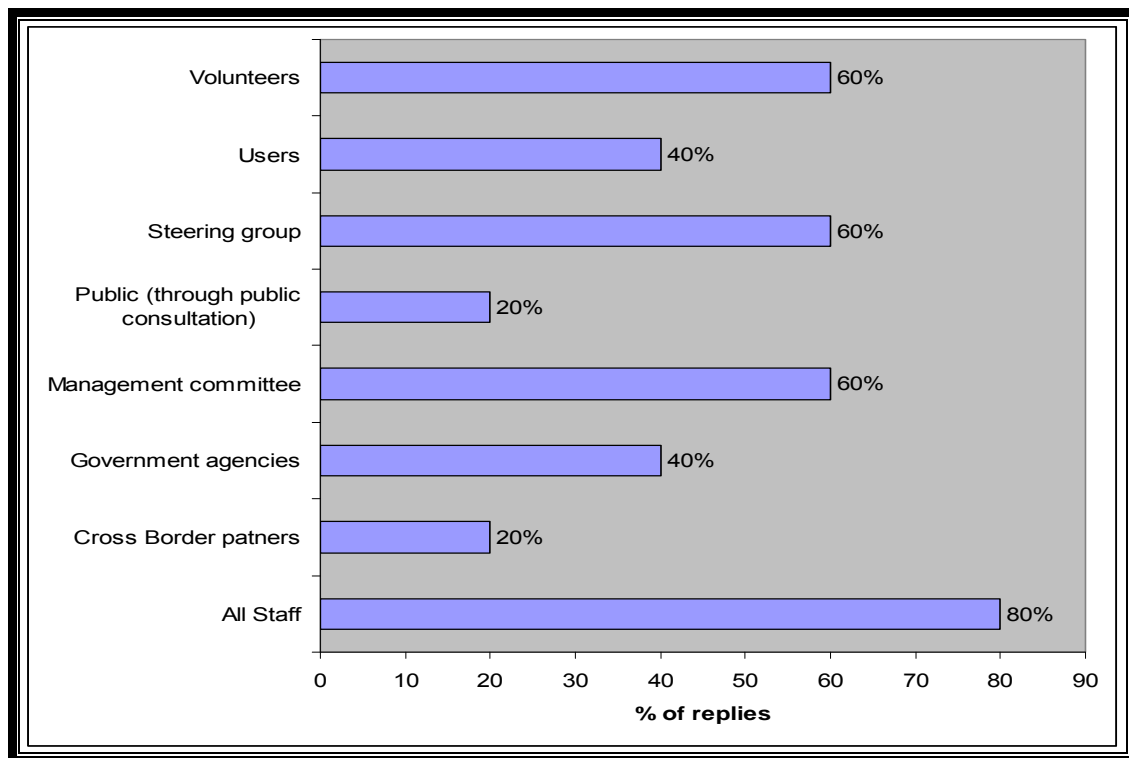
Strategic plan

The study sought to learn if community development organizations prepared strategic plans plus what parties were involved in the process and what time period the plan covered. The responses indicated a situation where responsibilities were specified and organizations set a timeline for achieving their purpose. When respondents were asked if their organization prepared a strategic plan, 71 per cent of all respondents answered 'Yes', which gave a reassuring picture of community development organizations in Donegal taking the initiative in developing a strategic plan. A further 29 per cent said that their organization did not have a strategic plan for future work.

However, when respondents who answered 'Yes' were asked to indicate the key parties involved in preparing the strategic plan for their organizations, a wide range of stakeholders were seen to be involved, as can be seen from the following figures and from Graph 37.

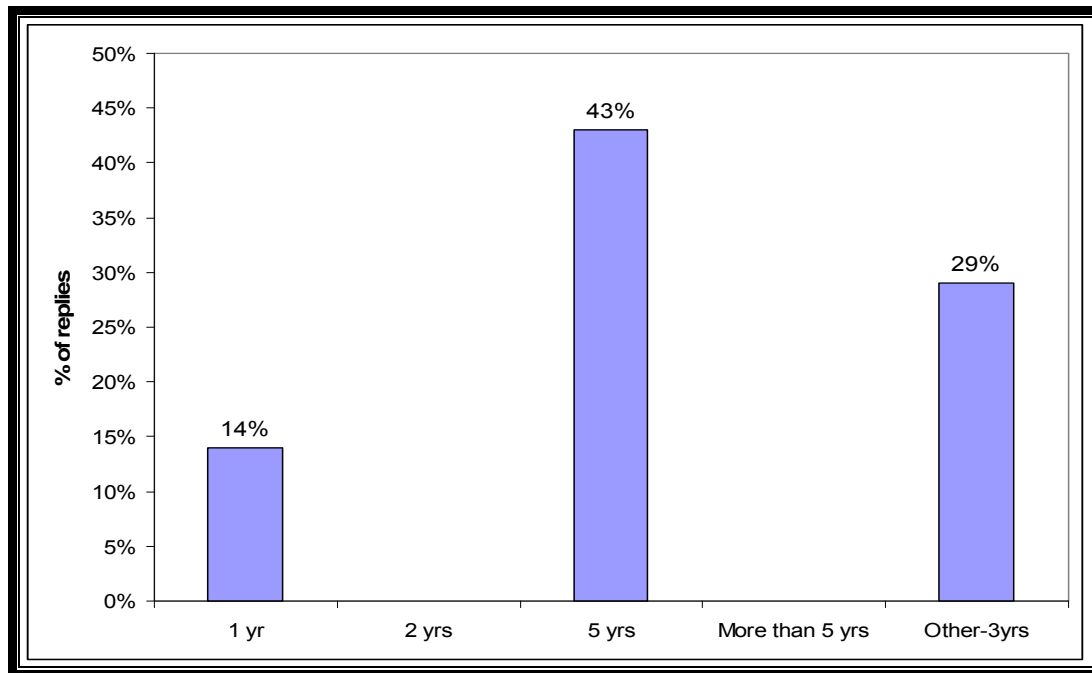
- All staff 80 per cent of respondents
- Management committee 60 per cent
- Steering group 60 per cent
- Government agencies and users 40 per cent
- Cross-border partners 20 per cent
- The public through consultation 20 per cent.

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Graph 37 Proportions of parties involved in the strategic plan

Further, when respondents were asked to indicate the time period that their organization's strategic plan covered, 43 per cent indicated five years; 29 per cent indicated the 'other' category and stated three years; and 14 per cent said the strategic plan covered one year (see graph 38).

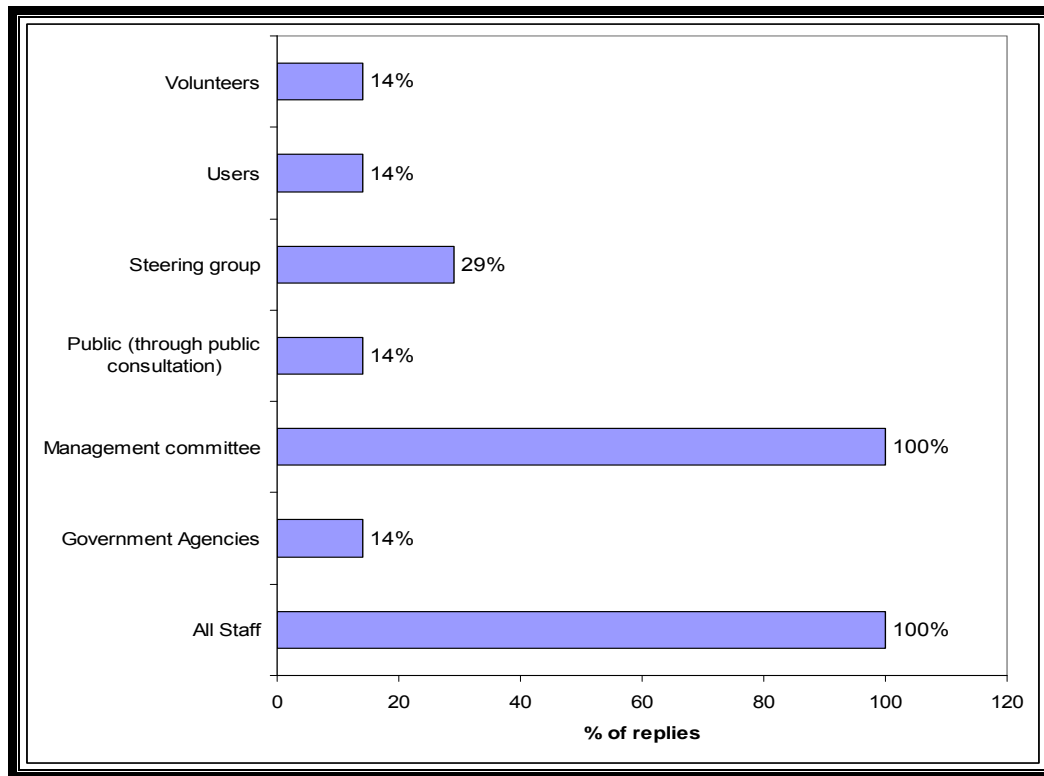


Graph 38 Proportions of time covered by strategic plan

Work plan

Next, the survey attempted to ascertain if the community development organizations that were surveyed prepared a work plan and what parties were involved and what time period it covered. Respondents were asked to indicate if their organization prepared a work plan. All the respondents said they did. They were then questioned about the key parties involved in preparing the work plan in their organization.

The management committee and 'all staff' were the most frequently cited parties involved in preparing the work plan, according to all the respondents. A significant proportion (29 per cent) indicated that the steering group was involved in preparing the work plan for the organizations surveyed. Other parties involved in preparing the work plan, according to all respondents, were Government agencies (14 per cent); the public (14 per cent); users (14 per cent) and volunteers (14 per cent).



Graph 39 Proportions of parties involved in preparing work plan

5.4 Funding and projects

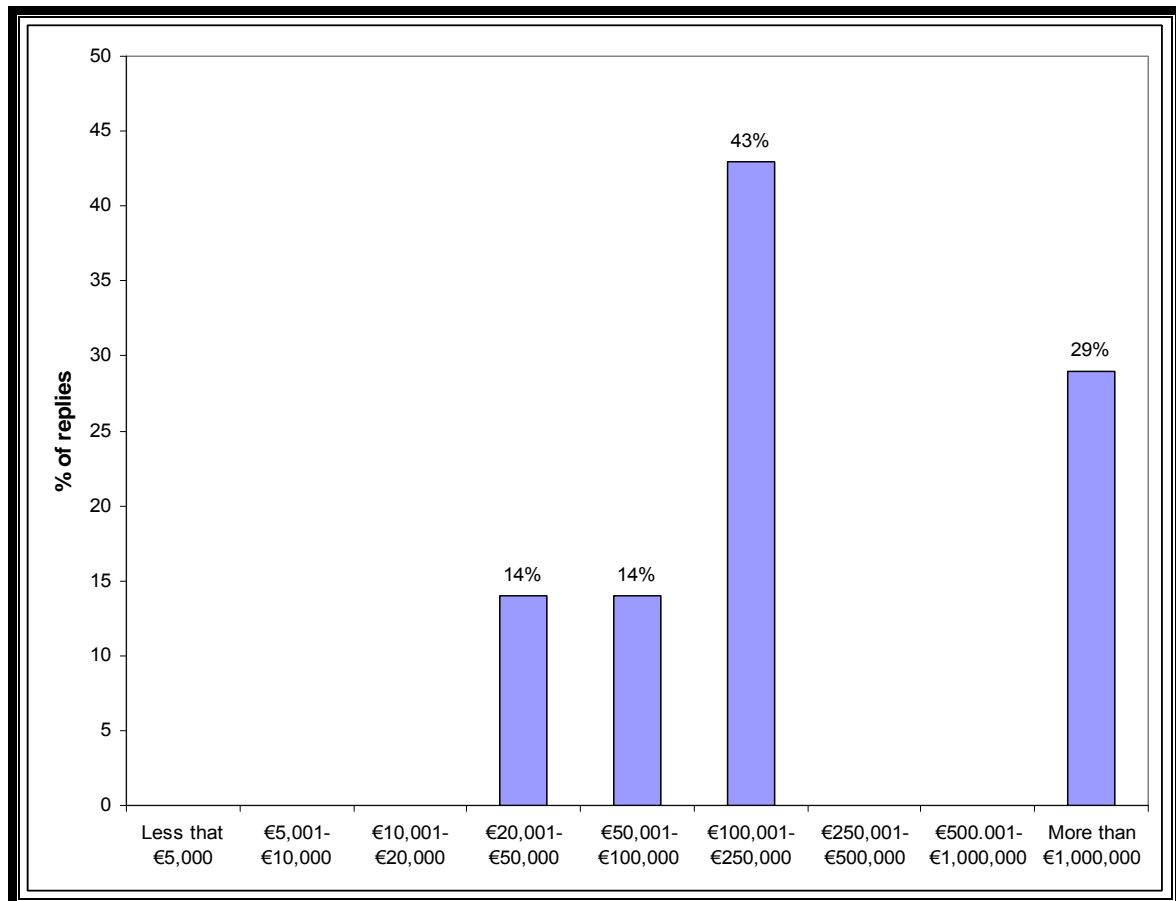
All community development organizations that responded were asked to provide information about the levels of funding and projects available to the organization.

The questions covered:

- Level of funding,
- Managing/planning of projects.

Level of funding

Respondents were asked to indicate the average amount of funding received by their organization during the year January to December 2007 (see Graph 40).



Graph 40 Level of funding to organizations surveyed in a year

Near half (43 per cent) of the organizations that responded said the level of funding in a year amounted to €100,001–€250,000. In 29 per cent of cases funding was more than €1,000,000; and 14 per cent of the organizations’ funding amounted to €20,001–€50,000 and to €50,001–€100,000 respectively.

Respondents were also asked to identify where most (defined as over 70 per cent) and other (defined as less than 30 per cent) of their organization’s funding had come from in the previous three years (2005–2008) (see Table 19).

Table 19 Sources of funding

Sources of funding	Where 70% comes from	Where less than 30% come from
CE Scheme (Community Employment)	14%	14%
Charity or Private trust	0	0

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EU (e.g. European Social Fund)	71%	43%
Fundraising / donation	0	29%
Government Agencies	43%	14%
Government Department	29%	14%
Health Service Executive (HSE)	0	29%
Local Development Body (e.g. Social Inclusion Partnership)	0	29%
Local Government	0	14%
Membership Subscription	0	0
National Lottery	0	29%
Private commission (Fee for work carried out)	14%	29%
Other- International Fund for Ireland	14%	0

Note: Though respondents were asked to indicate one source of funding, the total adds up to more than the number of returns of the questionnaire and the percentage adds up to more than 100 per cent because some respondents indicated more than one source of funding. European funds include Special EU Programmes Body providing all structural funds including Peace Programme.

The EU was identified as the main source of the ‘most’ funding category (71 per cent) and in the case of the ‘other’ (less than 30 per cent) category of funding it was the source of 43 per cent of funding for community development organization in the three years 2005–2008. This was consistent across all community development organizations surveyed. Many community development organizations in Donegal are involved in cross border projects and have benefited from more substantial funding from Peace I, Peace II and the Peace III extension programmes, with a smaller number benefiting from INTERREG III measure 3.1. Other organizations obtained the main source of their funding directly from government agencies (43 per cent) and government departments (29 per cent). In addition, 14 per cent of all respondents identified both government agencies and government departments as the source of their ‘other’ funding that is, less than 30 per cent category. A significant proportion of respondents (29 per cent) identified the Health Services Executive (HSE) as the source of their organization’s ‘less than 30 per cent’ category of funding. Again, 29 per cent of respondents identified Local Development Body such as Social Inclusion Partnership as the place from where less than 30 per cent of their organization funding came.

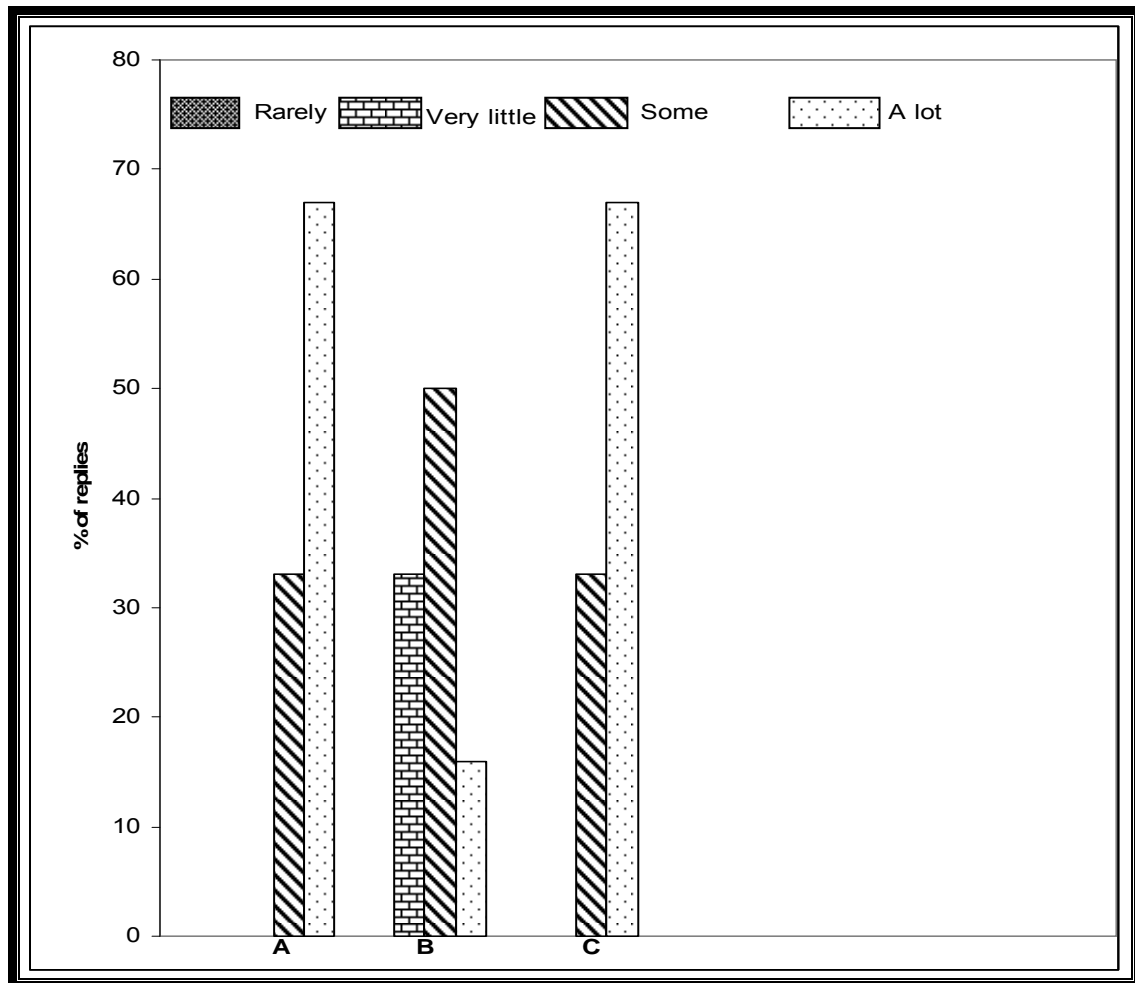
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Given the current period of cutback by the Government to its departments and agencies, concern were expressed about funding issues for many community development organizations in Donegal that relied heavily on government funding (72 per cent) to engage in community development programme, especially for year 2009.

In the 'main, 70per cent' category of funding, many organizations also identified CE Scheme (14 per cent); private commission (14 per cent); and through International Fund for Ireland (14 per cent) as the origin of their funding. CE Scheme also accounted for 14 per cent of organizations' 'less than 30 per cent' funding and other funding sources in this category were fundraising / donation (29 per cent); private commission (29 per cent); and through National Lottery (29 per cent).

Managing/planning of community development projects

Respondents were asked to indicate if their organization was involved in managing/ or planning community development projects and 85 per cent of respondents answered 'Yes'. Those who answered affirmatively were then questioned about the extent to which their community organization's project was driven by the wider community (see Graph 41).



Graph 41 Level and extent to which organization project is driven by wider community

- A. Addressing the community's needs
- B. Using community's resources wisely
- C. Improving lives for individual and community.

The responses showed that 67 per cent of community development organizations surveyed used projects a 'lot' to address the community's needs; that 67 per cent also did so to improve lives for individual and community and that 17 per cent used projects a lot for using the community's resources wisely. A significant proportion of respondents were certain that their organization's project was driven in 'some' way to address the community's needs (33 per cent); half of respondents (50 per cent) used projects in 'some' way to use community's resources wisely and over one-third (37 per cent) did so to improve lives for individual and community. These responses show that the level and extent to which community development organization projects in Donegal were

driven by the wider community represents a challenge for community organizations, which must make certain that their workers are geared to ensuring that the wider community is reflected in their work. Very few (33 per cent) identified that their organization's project was 'rarely' driven by the aim of using community resources wisely.

5.5 Staff and training

All community organization respondents were asked to provide information about their organization's staff and training. The questions covered:

- Number of staff employed (paid and unpaid),
- Number of people worked with/seen on a weekly basis,
- Number of groups worked with on a monthly basis;
- Number of groups created on a yearly basis;
- Staff support.

Number of staff employed

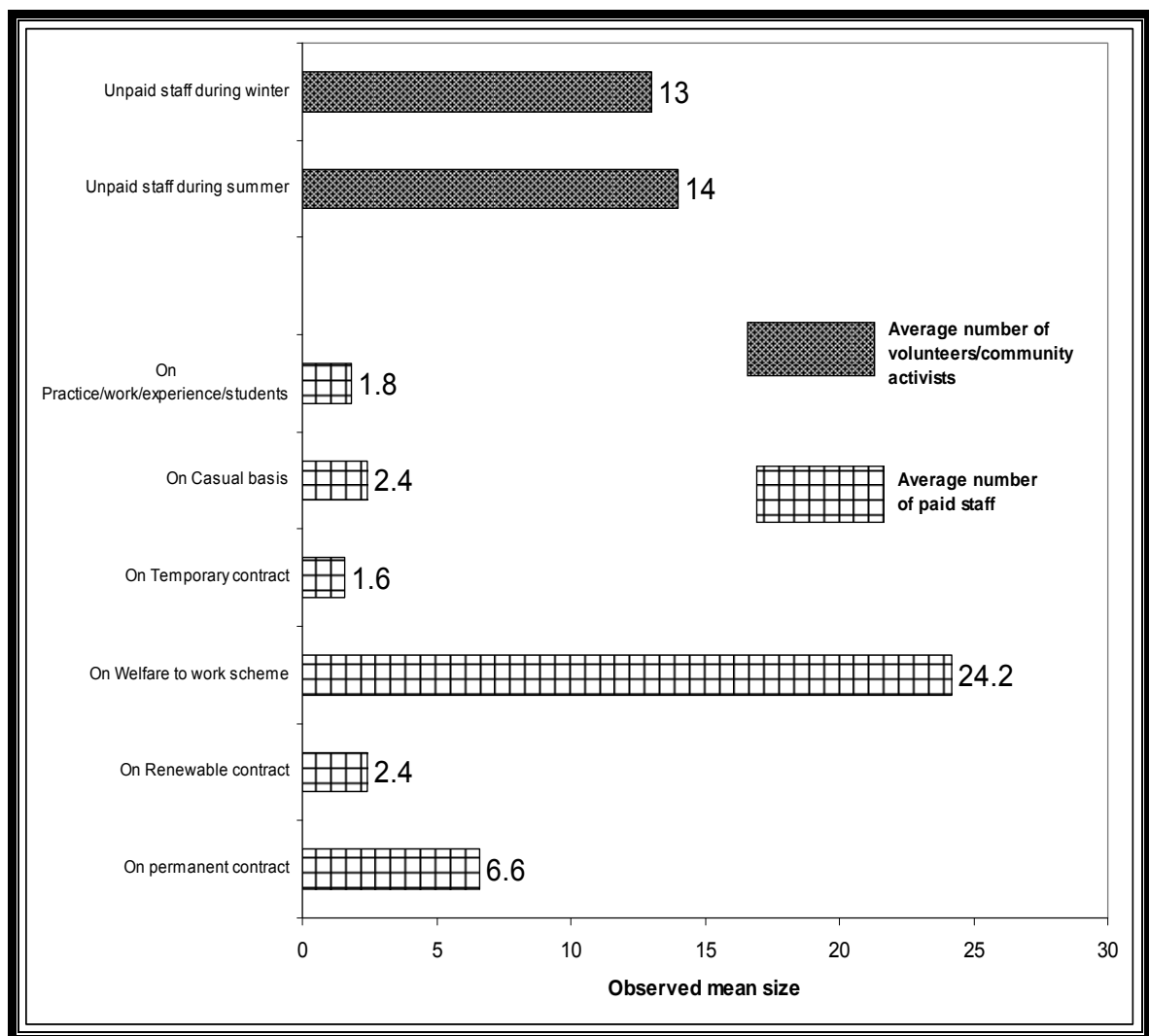
This was an attempt to profile the average number of staff employed within community development organizations in Donegal. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of paid community development workers in their organization. It might be tactical to average the numbers of people working as a community development worker in a community development organization because this could be useful in a further study for mapping the community organization landscape in terms of its working consensus.

Among the respondents, 71 per cent indicated that their organizations employed paid community development workers. Only 29 per cent gave their response as 'not applicable', which suggests that their organizations were small and informal with no paid staff. On the other hand this showed that not all community development activity was done by paid staff. Furthermore, those who employed paid staff, on average, had more paid staff on welfare to work scheme than paid staff on permanent contract (24.2 on average versus 6.6 respectively) (see Graph 42). Community development organizations surveyed were more likely to hire paid staff on a casual basis (2.4 average); on renewable contract (2.4) and

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on a basis of practice / work experience / student (1.8) to equal the number of paid staff they would employ on permanent contract (6.6 versus 6.6 respectively). There was a feeling that this growth in short-term jobs would continue compared with the permanent contract posts.

As was observed in relation to the number of volunteers or community activists (unpaid staff) employed during summer and winter, the average number of unpaid staff employed during the summer period was slightly higher than those employed during winter (14 versus 13 respectively).



Graph 42 Average number of employees (paid and unpaid staff).

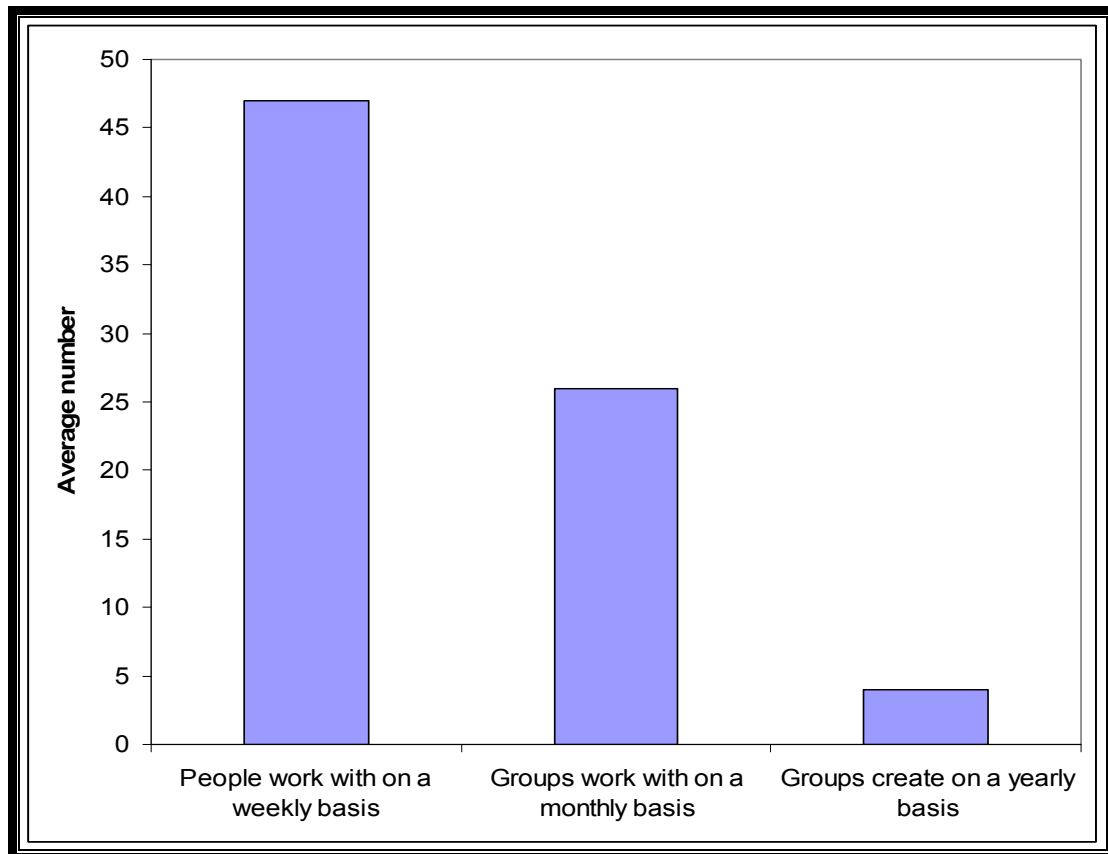
Note: Mean size represents the average number of employees in the category

Number of people work with/see on a weekly basis

Community development does not seek to impose solutions or structures on people. Rather it is about working with people to define their problems and deal with them, and voice their interests as part of decision-making. Respondents were asked to indicate how many people their organization worked with or saw, on average, on weekly basis. The proportions were significant and indicated that an average of 47 people were seen on a weekly basis. Although a small proportion (14 per cent) of respondents reported that the number was seasonal, we can say that all the community development organizations surveyed embraced the empowerment of communities.

Number of groups worked with on a monthly basis

Next, the survey tried to find out the proportion of groups that community organizations worked with on a monthly basis. Respondents were asked how many groups their organization worked with, on average, on a monthly basis. All indicated working with groups so that working with groups on a monthly basis was a predominant feature of community development organizations surveyed. The average size of groups worked with was 26 (see Graph 43). We can conclude that the process by which those community development organizations developed collaborative attitudes and practices in their community was effective.



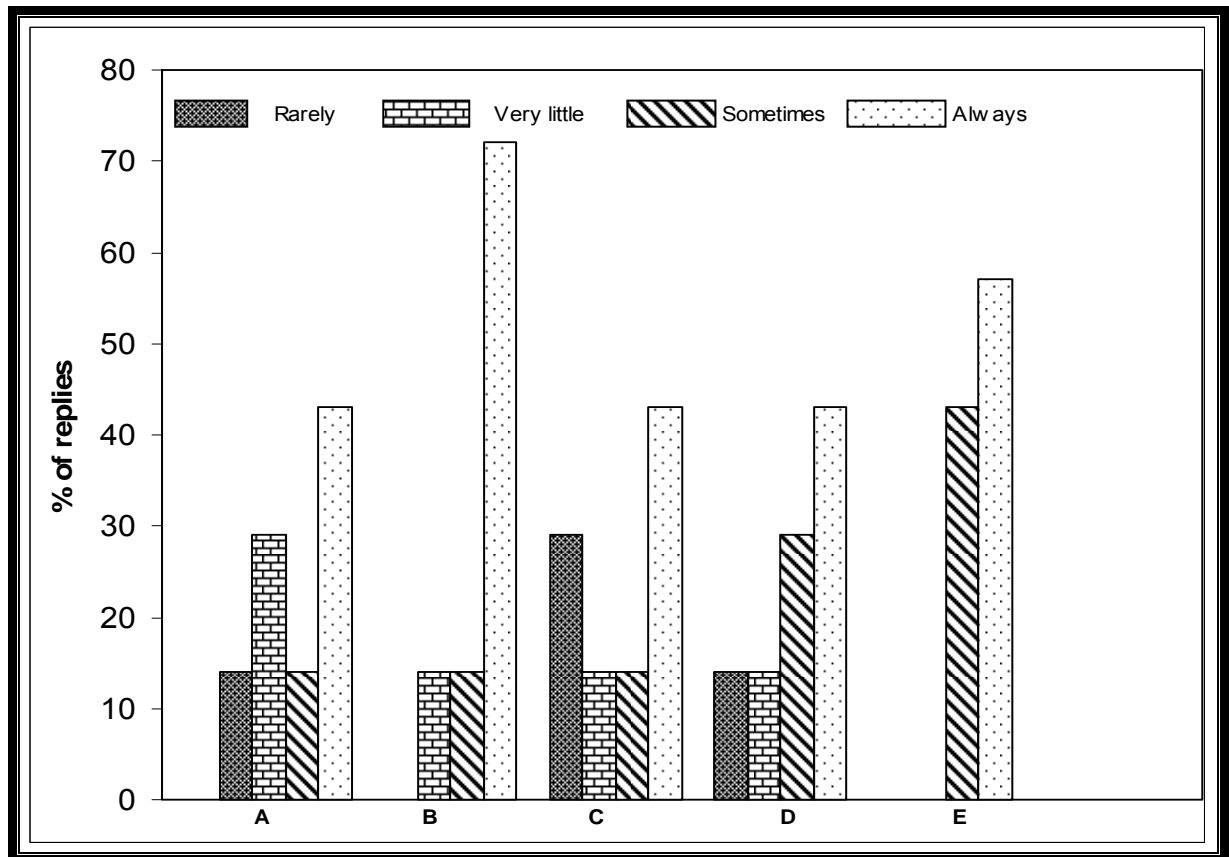
Graph 43 Average numbers of people and group work with and groups create

Number of groups worked with or created on a yearly basis

Respondents were next asked the number of groups their organizations had created, on average, on a yearly basis. The majority of respondents (71 per cent) stated that their organizations did not create groups but assisted groups being formed. Of those indicating, the number of groups their organizations had created on a yearly basis was four.

Staff support

The question on staff support asked how the community development organizations had assisted and supported its workers from a list of aspects of community development practice. It sought also to learn the extent to which organizations used different learning or techniques to train or support its both paid and unpaid staff. All respondents answered the question.



Graph 44 Extent that community development organization assists or supports its workers

- A. Funding staff training through grants,
- B. Providing information that staff need,
- C. Mentoring the volunteers,
- D. Bringing management and all members of staff (paid/unpaid) together through meetings,
- E. Provide supervision.

The responses showed that community development organizations surveyed were not significantly committed (43 per cent) to funding staff training through grants. A significant proportion of respondents indicated that their organizations 'rarely' (14 per cent) committed to funding staff training through grants. A similar proportion (14 per cent) of respondents indicated that their organizations 'sometimes' did so but 29 per cent indicated their organization committed 'very little' to funding staff training through grants.

Framework for pilot survey of community development workers

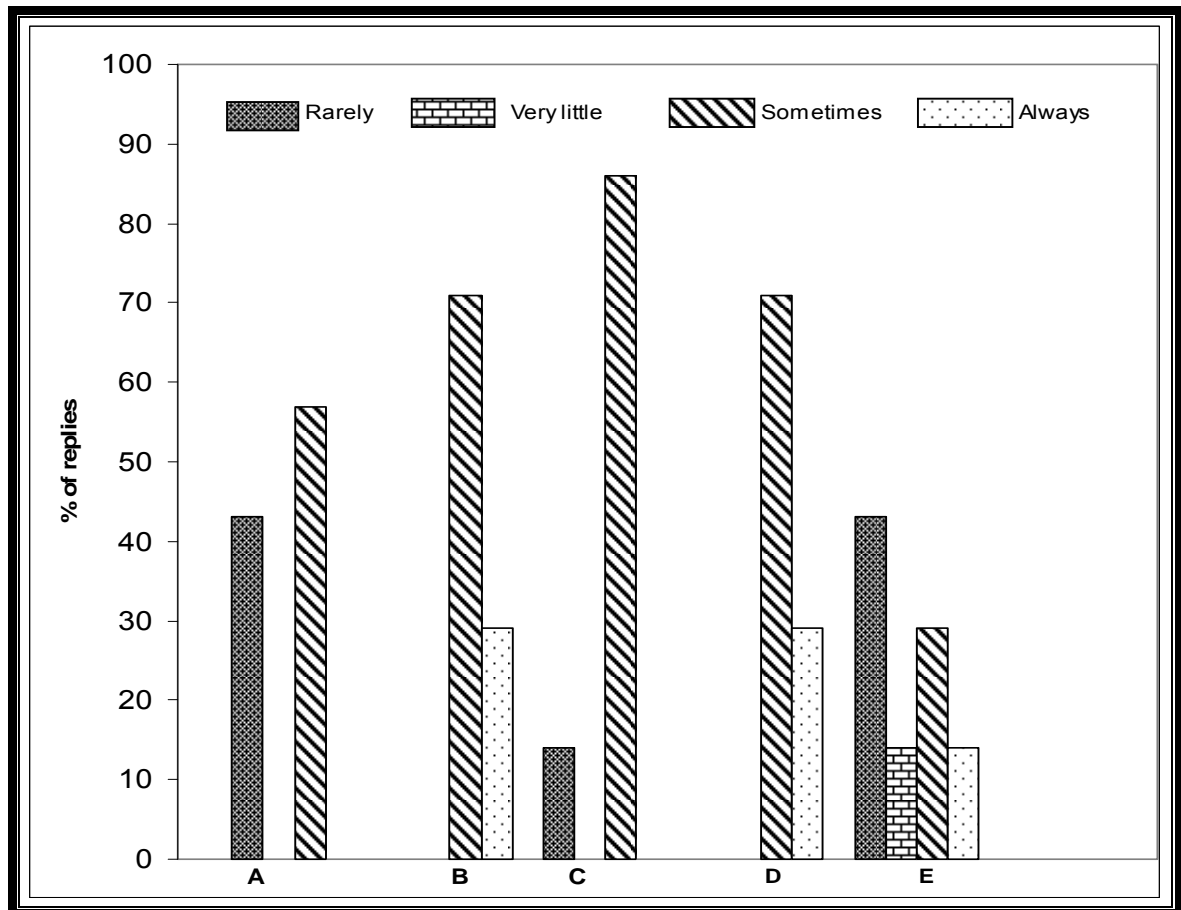
The efforts made by the community development organizations surveyed at providing information that staff needed was also explored. The majority (71 per cent) of community development organizations surveyed were found to always have provided information that their staff needed. There were, however, a small proportion of respondents who indicated that their organizations only provided the information 'sometimes' (14 per cent) and 'very little' (14 per cent).

There are certain benefits to be gained by community development organizations from mentoring their volunteers, including having an insight into issues facing people in other communities, improving volunteers' skills and increasing their self-confidence. Of respondents to the survey, 43 per cent indicated their organizations did it 'always', but others indicated that it happened 'sometimes' (14 per cent) or 'very little' (14 per cent), and a significant proportion (29 per cent) indicated that their organizations rarely mentored volunteers.

Evidence emerged in the survey that a few community development organizations surveyed (14 per cent) lacked the ability to bring together management and all members of staff (paid and unpaid) through meetings. However, many stated that it happened 'sometimes' (29 per cent) and 'very little' (14 per cent). However, nearly half (43 per cent) stated that it happened 'always' in their organization.

Clear evidence emerged in the survey of the full support given by the organizations surveyed to always (57 per cent) provide adequate supervision. Nearly a half (43 per cent) further indicated that their organization provided supervision 'sometimes'.

Respondents were next asked to indicate the extent to which their organizations used community development practices to train or support its staff (paid and unpaid).



Graph 45 Extent of training or supporting staff

- A. Lectures/Seminars,
- B. Discussions,
- C. Trip to other communities,
- D. Research into local experiences,
- E. Practical communities project with supervision.

The responses showed that the majority of community development organizations surveyed 'sometimes' trained and supported staff through the use of the following methods:

- Lectures/seminars (57 per cent),
- Discussions (71 per cent),
- Trip to other communities (86 per cent),
- Research into local experiences (71 per cent),
- Involvement of workers in practical community's project with supervision (14 per cent).

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Some significant proportions of respondents, however, indicated that their organizations 'rarely' used lectures and seminars (43 per cent); research into local experiences (14 per cent); and practical community project with supervision (43 per cent) to train and support its staff. Very few respondents indicated that their organizations 'always' used discussions (29 per cent); research into local experiences (29 per cent); and practical community project with supervision (14 per cent).

Summary

From these findings a profile of community development organizations in Donegal can be drawn::

- A majority (86 per cent) of organizations surveyed were formed between 1991 and 2005,
- A high proportion of community and voluntary community organizations are made up of the following types – formal (86 per cent); statutory (29 per cent); and integrated development company (29 per cent),
- Community development organizations in Donegal are established, to a significant extent, to take up issues-based support work and issues affecting a number of groups in the neighbourhood.
- Organizations primarily target marginalized people (85 per cent) and largely work in peace-building to provide general services to the community (71 per cent) and accomplish social change (71 per cent),
- The majority (71 per cent) of community development organizations are registered with the County Development Board,
- Organizations form strong relationships with state and development agencies. They network and form partnerships with other community organizations at the level of the county, the island of Ireland/cross-border (14 per cent) and at EU/transnational level to source funding;
- They are engaging in a wide range of policy issues,
- A high level of stakeholders are involved in drawing up organizations' work plan and strategic plans,
- It appears that all organizations surveyed are committed to providing staff support in one way or another.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

6.1. Conclusions

This study aimed to contribute towards the building of a picture of community development work and community development workers in Ireland. Data from this study has helped address our research questions and the initial objective of a national survey, which is to strengthen the information base available for understanding the nature and content of community development work and workers in Ireland.

Community development workers

From the survey, female respondents (79 per cent) outnumbered male respondents (21 per cent). The age range of paid and unpaid community development workers who responded to the survey extended from the 20–29 years category to over-70. The age of unpaid workers suggests an ‘ageing workforce’ where younger people do not see community development work as a career option. The survey also revealed that, out of the 80 per cent who were in full-time employment in community development, only 25 per cent of these were permanently employed. A further 10 per cent indicated that they were temporarily employed, while five per cent were in welfare-to-work schemes and five per cent did not answer the question.

The reliance on questionnaires as the data source has provided, to some extent, an information base about the nature and content of community development work in the pilot area, in terms of numbers, profile, experience, and community development work remit.

Anti-poverty strategy

The findings in the survey also support another objective of a national survey, which is the strengthening of the information base available for assessing the impact of community development as an anti-poverty strategy. From the survey, the role and work settings of community development workers showed a remit for local work and for working with specific groups. In the survey, for instance,

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respondents indicated that they worked on particular concerns and with the following groups:

- Unemployed people 45 per cent,
- Families 65 per cent,
- Children 60 per cent,
- Men 55 per cent.

The survey showed that 55 per cent of paid workers and 33 per cent of unpaid respondents worked in partnership bodies. The emphasis among workers surveyed on empowering and supporting people's involvement suggests that considerable time was spent on the ground on one-to-one work to support and encourage the involvement of members of the community.

The objectives of strengthening the information available and of assessing the anti-poverty effect of community development was achieved in the survey through the use of questionnaires, where evidence of community development organization and community development work was gathered in the context of community work practice, work priorities, groups that were worked with and work remits.

Another objective of a national survey, strengthening the information base available so as to develop strategies to strengthen the human capital (skills and technical knowledge) of community development workers, was also supported by the pilot survey. From the survey in Donegal, there appeared to be a high level of education in professional qualifications that were specific to community development, although it appeared that employers did not explicitly seek them. This raised the question of the recognition and perceived value given by employers to such qualifications.

Comments made in the survey about 'permanency' of employment of community development workers were perplexing in that 80 per cent overall said they had full-time posts defined as permanent but many of such posts (55 per cent) were short term. Short-term posts could be seen as a factor that created difficulties in terms of career progression particularly within the voluntary sector and a 'barrier'

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to those seeking or needing a stable and secure work environment. These findings and hosts of others were also achieved through use of questionnaires, which provided quantitative data on community development workers' skills and evidence of their wish to take up training.

If these finding were to be verified in a national study:

- Key points that describe the 'occupation' of community development workers in Ireland could be drawn,
- Recommendations about the key issues that may need to be addressed by community development workers, employers, professional organizations and policy-makers could be made.

Such a future study would fill gaps in the community development literature in Ireland and maximise the effectiveness of a national study for the use of policy-makers.

Recommendations

It is likely that additional method would be needed to connect the questionnaire survey with other sources of information and verification. The existing self-identification method of reporting and new methods could be more effective in reaching community development workers and community development organizations working with both communities of locale and communities of interest. Therefore it is suggested that in a national survey:

- Questionnaires be combined with one or more qualitative methods, e.g. interviews. This could help to fill out the written responses made in the questionnaires,
- Include in the survey planning a provision to run meetings (called verification workshops) for networks of community development workers. This could help reduce the length of questionnaires.
- Consider a 'count survey' of community development organizations. There are potential sources of additional information, notably the registration of community development organizations with their regional County Development Board. This could help to map the community development organizations in Ireland.

Comprehensive vetting strategies to decide who should be included in the sample would need to be based on a core definition of community development workers and community development organizations and combined with scrutiny as to whether workers or organizations actually were doing community development work. The established findings in this survey on the job titles, roles and work settings of community development workers in Donegal, and on the core values of community development organizations might be usable as a check to see that organizations or workers considered for inclusion in a national survey fitted the remit of a community development organizations or community development worker.

Based on the research conducted, the use of the community development model in Figure 1 and on the three questionnaires used in the survey, three propositions are made for further study:

- On the application of the model in Figure 1

Although the model in Figure 1 was built to address the issue of the 'representativeness' of the pilot survey, it helped us identify three examinable elements:

- Who is a community development worker,
- Who do community development workers worked with,
- What do community worker do?

The combination of these made it possible for us to construct three surveys. In examining the model during the analysing stage of the pilot study it became apparent that the model was much more a target model, illustrating who should be in the sample. As it stands, it does not fit into the framework of who is to be included in the survey. It is therefore of paramount importance that the model should clearly fit into a framework of who should be included in the sample. For the present model to do this, it should be integrated with the pilot study definition of a community development worker and community development organization and used as a tool to analyse and determine those to be included in the sample.

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- On the data collection

Evidence from the survey findings suggests that the information gained by asking people and organizations to self-identify if they are doing community development work helped to generate data for analysis. However, this might present problems for a national survey due to its size and scope and the objective of generating national data. Therefore it is of paramount importance that survey data should be developed and identified through regional focus groups of community development workers across the country and using the expertise of the research advisory groups. From this, the lists of community development workers could be built using list building systems. Through these methods data collection could be regionalised for easy sample building and analysis.

- On the analysis of the survey

Findings from this pilot survey highlight some of the complexities involved in analysing paid and unpaid workers in the same section. Although analysing them together in this study suggested that equal credence was being given to the contribution of both paid and unpaid workers, the research found evidence that the roles and tasks undertaken by unpaid and unpaid worker were different and therefore difficult to tease out in the analysis. It is extremely important, therefore, to have a separate section in any further study, which might bring out explicitly the contribution each makes to community development work and which might enable some exploration of views about the relationship between paid and unpaid workers.

In summary, this pilot study has generated baseline data, which might provide a basis for a future study. The pilot study has addressed a significant information gap in literature on community development research in Ireland, which was identified in the literature review. Recommendations can be made for the conduct of a future national survey based on the methodological lessons that were learned in the process of developing the pilot survey, obtaining the pilot data and on the pilot survey findings.

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